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OPINION METER

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island that tourists expect
is adversely affected by
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INSIDE

BUSINESS



When Justin Bassett interviewed for a new job, he expected the usual questions about experience and references. So he was astonished when the interviewer asked for something else: his Facebook username and password.

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ASIA



When Taiwanese security personnel detained a suspected spy for China at a top secret military base last month, they may have had a sense of déjà vu.

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FOCUS



Sagira Ansari sits on a dusty sack outside her uneven brick home in this poor town in eastern India, her legs folded beneath her. She cracks her knuckles, then rubs charcoal ash between her palms.

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\$45.6M revenue projected for CUC. PAGE 2
January visitor arrivals up 10 pct. PAGE 3

FUND'S IGISOMAR ON VERGE OF REJECTION, TOO

Senate rejects Fitial appointees to PUC, MPLT



HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota), left, gestures as she belies accusations by Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan), right, that Rota and Tinian senators may have been purposely rejecting Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's board and commission nominees from Saipan, during a heated debate yesterday afternoon. The Senate rejected the governor's nominees to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission and the Marianas Public Land Trust.

» Reyes accuses Rota, Tinian senators of thumbing down Saipan nominees because of Fitial's remarks

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial may have been paying for his controversial remarks calling Rota and Tinian senators "stupid" over the defeat of a Saipan casino bill as the Senate rejected yesterday the governor's nominees to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission and the Marianas Public Land Trust.

A nominee to the NMI Retirement Fund could face the same fate. The Senate earlier rejected another MPLT

See SENATE on Page 4

Proposed \$15 environmental, tourism fee on hotel, condominium occupants

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) pre-filed a bill that would assess a \$15 environmental and tourism promotional fee among tourists or "transient" occupants of hotels, lodging houses, motels, resort motels, apartments, apartment hotels, condominiums, and similar facilities in the CNMI.

The proposed \$15 fee will be assessed only on transient occupants below 13 years old.

Cabrera is set to introduce House Bill 17-290 during today's session.

The bill seeks to amend Public Law 17-58 or the Tourism Incentive Program which provides incentives to travel agencies bringing in more tourists to the CNMI and also charges passengers from non-U.S. destinations a new \$15 travel promotion fee.

Cabrera's HB 17-290 seeks to amend that law signed on Nov. 4, even before the regulations to implement it have yet to be finalized.

See PROPOSED on Page 4

New clue gives hope to solving Earhart mystery

By MATTHEW LEE
ASSOCIATED PRESS



WASHINGTON (AP)—A new clue in one of the 20th century's most enduring mysteries could soon uncover the fate of American aviator Amelia Earhart, who went missing without a trace over the South Pacific 75 years ago, investigators said Tuesday.

Enhanced analysis of a photograph taken just months after Earhart's Lockheed Electra disappeared

See EARHART on Page 4

An undated file photo shows Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.



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Local

\$45.6M revenue projected for CUC

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. projects to turn a profit next fiscal year—a first in many years.

Based on financial records the agency made available to the *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, CUC expects its revenue to hit a total of \$45.6 million in fiscal year 2013. This projection is based on currently approved rates with the assumption that rate increases for the foreseeable future will be minimal, if any.

According to Charles Warren, CUC's chief financial officer, the agency projects revenue from power to total \$25.7 million; water, \$14.4 million; and wastewater, \$5.4 million.

Minus the projected uncollectible of about 3 percent, or \$1.3 million, Warren said that projected revenues will go down to \$44.2 million.

Since the operations budget is projected at \$41.7 million, this will give CUC a positive income revenue of \$2.497 million next fiscal year.

Warren said that CUC will break even if debt servicing and capital outlays are factored into the equation.

Based on CUC records, its

largest expense is fuel and lube, which it projects to reach \$78.1 million next fiscal year. This factor is highly dependent on the market price of diesel. Included in the equation is the effect of various renewable energy projects that are expected to be online in 2013. CUC estimates that up to 36,978 megawatts of power will be provided under various power purchase agreements at an average cost to CUC of \$0.205 per kilowatt-hour.

For personnel cost, the agency projects to incur \$14.1 million, of which salaries and wages will amount to \$10.3 million; employer contributions, \$2.5 million; and overtime costs, \$1.1 million. CUC's full-time employee count is 391 and includes vacant positions that reflect the manpower requirements as mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

CUC projects to spend \$3.1 million for professional services, which included regulatory fees to consultants and specialists, the 1-percent fee to the Office of Public Auditor, laboratory fees, legal fees, and other expert fees.

The total budget for repairs and maintenance is projected at \$5.8 million: \$3 million for the

power division, \$1 million for the water division, and \$1.7 million, wastewater division.

CUC said that although it has rehabilitated its main generators and has greatly improved capacity, maintenance is an ongoing process and is vital to keep the power supply stable.

Saipan Tribune learned that the total maintenance budget is not enough to fund all maintenance costs. The planned maintenance work at the power plants has been deferred after the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission declined CUC's request for a full increase in its power rates.

CUC also projects to spend \$15 million in 2013 to pay independent power producers that run Power Plant 4 and the power plant on Tinian, plus internal power usage costs for water and wastewater's wells, pumps, lift stations, and treatment plants.

CUC has budgeted \$1 million for supplies—for both administrative and operational items—while allocating \$940,000 for other services such as security services as required by the U.S. Coast Guard for the power plant vicinities, treatment plants, and others. Other expense such as credit card fees is estimated at \$300,000.

Chalan Laulau, Beach Road



January visitor arrivals up 10 pct.

January 2012 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands were up 10 percent compared to January 2011.

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota registered 38,263 visitors in January compared to 34,738 in January 2011. Overall, visitor arrivals are up 5 percent this fis-

Ex-Ladera operator directed to pay former school owners \$1.2M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo has ordered the former operator of the defunct Ladera International School of Saipan to pay the school's former owners \$1.2 million for breach of contract and fraud.

In a default judgment issued last week, Govendo found Sung Yun Kim liable to pay brothers Yong Nam Park and Yong Sung Park and their parent, Pil Hwan Park, \$437,854.88 for breach of contract and \$11,500 as reimbursement of attorney's fees.

Govendo also awarded the Parks \$761,105.49 based upon Kim's fraudulent conduct.

On the breach of contract issue, the judge determined that the \$437,854.55 represents the balance of the agreed purchase price for the interest in Ladera based on the terms and conditions of their assets purchase agreement.

As for the fraud issue, Govendo determined that based upon wire transfer documents and testimonies, Kim misappropriated \$322,349.95 for her personal use.

Also based on the audit and other evidence, Govendo said

cal year to 125,649 visitors.

Arrivals from Japan dropped 1 percent to 15,467 in January, as the CNMI received two daily flights from Narita for most of the month, compared to three daily flights in January 2011.

However, due to high demand during the peak travel season, Delta Air Lines operated a third weekly flight, and

that Kim misappropriated an additional \$438,762.54 that were provided her by the Parks for Ladera.

The Parks filed the \$1-million lawsuit against Kim in 2011 for allegedly mismanaging Ladera and embezzling its funds.

Yong Nam Park and Kim set up the Ladera School with the Park brothers as shareholders. Since 2005, Kim was allegedly primarily responsible for handling financial matters relating to the Ladera school.

According to the complaint, Kim grossly mismanaged the school, failed to pay corporate taxes, embezzled funds, failed to pay the wages to teachers and caused substantial damage to the school and to the Parks.

When Kim was arrested in South Korea in February 2010 on charges of engaging in fraudulent activities relating to her business in the country, the Parks took over the operation of Ladera and learned about her mismanagement of the school.

Ladera shut down in August 2010 after more than four years of operation. Last year, Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman approved the sale of the Ladera property to a group of investors for \$505,000.

Asiana Airlines has also relaunched daily service from Osaka in December.

Arrivals from Korea were up 1 percent to 12,758 visitors. Delta Air Lines operated Busan-Saipan charter flights from Jan. 5 to Feb. 26, 2012 on Thursdays and Sundays, while Asiana Airlines has continued to operate its Busan-Saipan charter flights launched in November.

Arrivals from China increased 96 percent in January to 7,660 visitors. This January the NMI received six flights weekly from China, compared to only two flights weekly last January, demand driven by the celebration of the lunar new year in January, this year.

"So far this fiscal year, the

Northern Marianas has received almost twice as many visitors from China as the same period last year," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "This

underscores the continued and growing importance of the China market for us."

Arrivals from Russia posted an increase of 15 percent to 686

in January 2012. Increases were also registered from Hong Kong (54 percent to 43).

Arrivals were also down in January from Guam (9 percent to 976), the United States (10 percent to 437), the Philippines (33 percent to 27), and Other Areas (20 percent to 209). (MVA)

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EARHART*From Page 1*

heed Electra plane vanished shows what experts think may be the landing gear of the aircraft protruding from the waters off the remote island of Nikumaroro, in what is now the Pacific nation of Kiribati, they said.

Armed with that analysis by the State Department, historians, scientists and salvagers from The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, are returning to the island in July in the hope of finding the wreckage of Earhart's plane and perhaps even the remains of the pilot and her navigator Fred Noonan.

Ric Gillespie, executive director of the group, acknowledged that the evidence was "circumstantial" but "strong" but stopped short of predicting success. The new search is scheduled to last for 10 days in July and will use state-of-the-art underwater robotic submarines and mapping equipment.

"The most important thing is not whether we find the ultimate answer or

what we find, it is the way we look," he said. "We see this opportunity to explore...the last great American mystery of the 20th century as a vehicle for demonstrating how to go about figuring out what is true."

Earhart and Noonan disappeared July 2, 1937, while flying from New Guinea to Howland Island as part of her attempt to become the first female pilot to circumnavigate the globe.

Extensive searches at the time uncovered nothing and many historians are convinced they crashed into the ocean. In addition, conspiracy theories, including claims that they were U.S. government agents captured by the Japanese before the Second World War, still abound despite having been largely debunked.

Gillespie's group believes Earhart and Noonan may have managed to land on a reef abutting the atoll, then known as Gardner Island, and survived for a short time. They surmise that the plane was washed off the reef by high tides shortly after the landing and that the wreckage may be found in the deep waters nearby.

governor finds the Senate's rejection "very disappointing, but certainly not unexpected."

"The administration strives to nominate individuals who are highly qualified and armed with the expertise that is needed to support the functions of the CNMI's boards and commissions. The rejection of Ms. Alepuyo does not benefit our community in any way. Rather, it will just prolong the standstill of the CPUC until such time that members are confirmed to serve and carry out its functions and duties," Demapan said.

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, when he was acting governor, nominated two others to PUC on March 14. These nominees are Joseph C. Guerrero to represent Saipan and Zenie P. Mafnas to represent Tinian.

The Senate, meanwhile, approved yesterday by a vote of 7-0 the reappointment of Adelina Roberto to serve on the Fund board, even though the EAGI panel held a public hearing on Igisomar and Roberto's nominations at the same time on Tuesday.

Senators also earlier rejected the governor's reappointment of Alvaro Santos to serve another term on the MPLT board.

'Pattern of rejections'

Reyes during a heated debate on the nominations, questioned his fellow senators about what he described as a "pattern" to reject Fitial's Saipan nominees who are also known supporters or associates of the governor.

Fitial called Rota and Tinian senators "stupid" after the Senate rejected yet again a House bill legalizing casino gambling on Saipan. The governor said a casino industry will help the CNMI's ailing economy because of the "new" money it could bring.

"Who's next?" Reyes asked.

Cruz, chairman of the EAGI Committee, belied all the accusations hurled by Reyes, saying the committee's recommendations to reject the reappointment of Alepuyo, Fitial-Omar, and Santos are supported by findings of questionable decisions and conflicts, and not because of the governor's controversial remarks.

Reyes also offered to kneel down in front of the senators if that would make them confirm the nominees. Most of the senators voted to reject the nominees.

'Very disappointed'

Press secretary Angel Demapan, when asked for comment, said the

Their previous visits to the island have recovered artifacts that could have belonged to Earhart and Noonan and suggest they might have lived for days or weeks. Now, they have the new analysis of the October 1937 photo of the shoreline of the island. Experts say a blurry object sticking out of the water in the lower left corner of the black-and-white photo is consistent with a strut and wheel of a Lockheed Electra landing gear.

Renowned oceanographer Robert Ballard, who discovered the wreckage of the Titanic and the Bismarck and is advising the Earhart expedition, said the new analysis of the photograph could be the equivalent of a "smoking gun" as it narrows the search area from tens of thousands of square miles to a manageable size.

Ballard confessed to having been previously intimidated by the challenge of finding clues to Earhart's whereabouts.

"If you ever want a case of finding a needle in a haystack, this is at the top of the list," he at a State Department event where Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Transportation Sec-

jority of the senators, saying the nominees to CPUC, MPLT, and the Fund are qualified to continue serving on the boards.

Cruz said the EAGI panel does not question the qualifications of the nominees.

The EAGI Committee said Alepuyo currently holds positions for many relevant agencies in the CNMI and although her service is beneficial, "it conflicts with her position on CPUC."

The committee also said during Alepuyo's tenure, "there has been an apparent lack of control on LEAC rates and the price of utility services."

"Accordingly, members have expressed their disappointment with Ms. Alepuyo's performance," said the committee report recommending rejection of her reappointment.

House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan), who was in the Senate chamber during the Senate deliberation on Alepuyo's reappointment, later told reporters that the House leadership supports Alepuyo's nomination.

But the speaker, after consulting with House legal counsel John Cool, said both houses need to consent to the PUC nomination.

"But the House will still do its part and confirm her. It's just unfortunate that the Senate rejected her reappointment so she won't be able to serve another term," Cabrera said.

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan), chairman of the House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communication, said what Rota and Tinian senators did was "revenge" against the governor for calling them "stupid."

MPLT land purchase

The EAGI Committee said it was poised to recommend confirmation of Fitial-Omar's reappointment but it later on said she was "equally responsible" for the decision to buy a private property for \$272,000.

The Senate rejected former MPLT chair Alvaro Santos' reappointment mainly because of the private land purchase.

Cruz said politics is not behind the idea to reject Fitial-Omar's reappointment, but was based on questionable decisions MPLT made.

The committee said the MPLT board had given approval for Santos to find a

retary Ray LaHood gave their support and encouragement to the privately financed project.

Clinton hailed Earhart as an inspiration to Americans in difficult times as the nation struggled to emerge from the Great Depression and said her legacy could be a model for the country now.

"Amelia Earhart may have been an unlikely heroine for a nation down on its luck, but she embodies the spirit of an America coming of age and increasingly confident, ready to lead in a quite uncertain and dangerous world,"

PROPOSED*From Page 1*

If Cabrera's bill becomes law, the \$15 will be assessed on transient occupants of hotels and similar facilities, mostly tourists, instead of assessing passengers from non-U.S. destinations.

The speaker said funds derived from the \$15 fee will be deposited into a revolving fund administered by the Department of Finance and remitted to the Marianas Visitors Authority.

suitable property upon which to build an MPLT office building. But the board no longer had a quorum to approve and finalize the preliminary findings of Santos and Fitial-Omar's at the time the purchase was made.

"As a result, their actions are null and void and without legal authority as the board did not have quorum," the EAGI Committee said.

Representation

Demapan said while the Senate's rejection of Fitial-Omar does not result in a standstill for MPLT, it had hoped that she would be confirmed to serve another term as she has the experience of having served her first term as a trustee.

He said the administration had hoped that the Senate would act favorably to ensure compliance with the requirements to have a representative from Saipan, Tinian and Rota, as well as representation for Carolinians and women.

"The rejection of Fitial-Omar and Alepuyo deprives both Carolinians and women from the representation they deserve," he said.

Demapan also said the administration will have to consider other options and submit nominations with qualities that will be beneficial to the affected boards and commissions.

"Nonetheless, despite the senate's trend of action, Gov. Fitial will continue to ensure that he abides by the requirements to submit nominees who will represent women and Carolinians," he added.

The administration also made special mention of Reyes, one of three senators from Saipan, who was seeking the support of his colleagues to confirm the nominees who are from his constituency.

"The administration is grateful for Sen. Reyes' support and for his will to defend the interests of his constituents. The administration hopes that the EAGI, and the Senate as a whole, will consider the qualifications and the assets that each nominee brings to the table when deciding their next course of action," Demapan said.

'Nothing personal'

Senators debated Igisomar's reappointment, with the EAGI Committee chair questioning Igisomar's own admission that he spends 60 percent of his time on Retirement Fund issues rather than as a

she said. "She gave people hope and she inspired them to dream bigger and bolder."

"Today, we meet at a time when the challenges are not so dire despite what you might hear on cable television or talk radio. But these are still difficult days for many Americans," Clinton said. "After a long decade of war, terrorism and recession, there are some who are asking whether we still have what it takes to lead, and like that earlier generation we too could use some of Amelia's spirit."

These funds will then be used to build, equip, improve and maintain projects, agencies and facilities promoting recreation and tourism.

Under the bill, \$200,000 shall be allocated each for Rota and Tinian for charter flight tourism incentives and promotional programs.

The fee will be collected by the person who operates, owns or manages a hotel, lodging house and similar facilities. They are to remit the collected fee to Finance on or before the 20th of the succeeding month.

Commerce secretary.

But Igisomar explained that most of the time he spends dealing with Fund issues are during after office hours or after 4:30pm and during austerity Fridays. He said only when there's an emergency matter that he works on Fund issues during regular government hours.

Reyes, during session, said he's losing respect for the EAGI Committee chairman for his panel's inability to report on Igisomar's nomination.

"Is there personal animosity?" he asked. "I'm beginning to feel there's no respect for appointees from Saipan. Now it's Tinian and Rota reject people from Saipan. This is 'bad practice,'" he said.

Cruz said there's nothing personal or animosity on this issue.

Senators took turns responding to Reyes' accusations.

Igisomar went to the Senate chamber yesterday after senators debated his reappointment and went into recess so that the EAGI Committee would complete its report and recommendation.

However, when the session resumed, a move was made not to act on his appointment until the EAGI Committee completes its report. The motion mustered enough votes to pass.

Igisomar, in an interview, he leaves it all up to the Senate to decide on his nomination.

But Igisomar said the Senate's action will not be about him, but about the fate of the NMI Retirement Fund facing receivership if nothing is planned and done in 90 days. He said in line with judge Kenneth Govendo's recent decision, a so-called "Super Fund Committee" should be formed in the soonest possible time to address the pension agency's financial crisis.

"It's not really about myself but about putting people in the (Fund board)... If you're not going to approve me, then just remove me and immediately ask the governor to appoint someone else. Just don't drag it. Don't make me the person who is going to drag the issue," he told reporters.

The EAGI Committee also asked Igisomar to provide documents and explanation on what the Fund board has done on a controversial computer system contract with Gary Sword.

Igisomar also thanked Reyes for strongly advocating his reappointment.

'District accreditation more practical, efficient for PSS'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Two officials from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, or NCA, are on-island for the formal transition of the CNMI-Public School System from individual schools

accreditation to a system-wide evaluation process.

Dr. Mark Elgart, president and chief executive officer of Advanced NCA, and deputy chief accreditation officer of the U.S. Regional and State office Services, David S. Hurst, yesterday facilitated a

workshop for PSS administrators, program managers, and members of the Board of Education that aims to help them successfully achieve their goal for student learning.

After years of affiliation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, PSS

ended its accreditation with the organization and aligned itself with NCA. The objective is to transition from school level to a district level accreditation process.

Education Commissioner Dr. Rita A. Sablan said yesterday that PSS is now heading toward

the new direction.

"It's a new beginning and a new era for PSS. Today, we learned great things and ideas that are critical in the 21st century education environment," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

According to Hurst, moving to the new accreditation approach is "more practical and efficient" because it is expected to deliver quick progress. "The accreditation process through NCA Advanced is more of a partnership and we don't focus so much on coming in to see and say what's wrong and what needs to be fixed. Our approach is we work and sit down with them to figure out how we can best serve the students of the district," he said.

He added NCA performs

more of a supportive partner and less of an evaluator for all districts and schools it is accrediting.

Before over 60 participants gathered at Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Napu Room, Hurst and Elgart talked about Advanced standards, the importance of systems thinking, the Advanced NCA expectations for accreditation, and how to use student and stakeholder data effectively, among others.

Hurst said NCA has been in the accreditation work since 1895 and has over 30,000 institutions under its fold of which 70 percent to date have already transitioned from individual school accreditation approach to district-wide accreditation process.

US govt asks court to declare Miah in breach of plea agreement

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. government filed yesterday a motion asking the federal court to declare Mohammad Jahangir Miah, the suspect in a scheme of cashing fraudulent CNMI tax refund checks in grocery stores, in breach of a plea agreement that he entered in connection with the driver's license scam case.

Assistant U.S. attorney Garth R. Backe also filed a motion to continue the sentencing hearing of Miah presently scheduled for tomorrow, Friday, before the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

Backe said the plea agreement that Miah entered with the U.S. government last August, expressly stated that, should defendant "engage in criminal

conduct after the entry of his plea agreement and before sentencing," the government would then "be free from its obligations under the Agreement."

Backe said Miah, on the other hand, would remain "guilty of the matters to which he had pled pursuant to this Agreement."

The prosecutor said the U.S. government provides official notice to both Miah and the court of its position that defendant has, in breach of the agreement, engaged in such criminal conduct.

Backe said that on Monday, the defendant was charged with a criminal complaint charging him with conspiracy to commit bank fraud, an offense alleged to have commenced on or about Jan. 15, 2012 and continued to the date of filing.

In light of the charge and Miah's conduct, Backe said the government requests the court set the matter for hearing.

At the hearing, he said, the government intends to prove defendant's breach by a preponderance of the evidence.

"If, at the conclusion of the hearing, the court finds that defendant 'engaged in crimi-

nal conduct after the entry of his plea agreement and before sentencing,' the government will ask the court to further find that it is no longer bound by the terms of the agreement..." Backe said.

He also requested that Miah's sentencing tomorrow, Friday, be continued so that this issue can be addressed beforehand.

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'\$9M receivables key to meet MOE requirements'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Commissioner of Education Dr. Rita A. Sablan said yesterday that receivables from the central government is now down to over \$9 million.

This after the Public School System acknowledged the \$1.7 million being paid by the government for the schools' utility bills.

Sablan said based on PSS' analysis, the government owes the system \$11 million representing the unremitted budget allotments for fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

Pursuant to U.S. Department of Education mandate, budget for education must re-

flect 25 percent of the entire government budget. It was in 2009 when PSS received \$32 million of the \$44 million state fiscal stabilization fund awarded to the CNMI pursuant to that provision.

Sablan, who recently met with USDOE officials in Washington, D.C., admitted to *Saipan Tribune* that despite continued communication with the Executive Branch, PSS has yet to see a concrete initiative on the payment plan.

The commissioner said that she is also not aware if the CNMI government, being the

expenditure authority of the SFSF, had filed a waiver for unmet MOE to avert repayment of the full grant.

"If there's any kind of waiver to be filed, it should come from the Office of ARRA and the Executive Branch [not PSS]. I don't know if they filed and I can't answer that. But I am sure it is something that the

USDOE would be willing to consider given the economic hardship," she told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that she remains hopeful that both the governor and the Lt. governor will help the PSS keep afloat for the

schoolchildren.

Sablan disclosed that failure to receive these receivables will mean more challenges to PSS which need to provide quality learning and services to nearly 11,000 schoolchildren on islands.

The commissioner reiterated yesterday that because of budget constraints, streamlining measures will continue as directed including energy cost reduction, freeze hiring, maximizing personnel and school resources, and others.

She revealed that since the energy conservation policy was enforced, schools' utility cost significantly went down from \$290,000 in October to \$189,000 in February this year.

This fiscal year 2012, PSS is only appropriated \$30 million for its personnel and all others. Because all SFSF funds expired in September last year, education officials said the unremitted MOE will help the system pay for its personnel and utilities. PSS has over 1,000 employees of which a little over 500 are classroom teachers. Each payroll, their salaries are estimated

at \$1.1 million.

ARRA fund is so far the biggest investment for public schools in the past 23 years.

Saipan Tribune learned that the only thing that compares to it was the general obligation bond in 1998 when PSS received \$32 million which amount included the 50 percent local matching fund. In 1998, PSS built new schools.

Machete left behind in foiled burglary at Garapan house

A burglar left a 21-inch long machete in one of two apartment units in Garapan that he tried to break into early Monday morning.

The burglar ran off with a male companion who was acting as a lookout when one of the apartment's occupants saw him trying to open the door knob at the main door using a machete.

Police officers scoured the apartment's vicinity but failed to catch the burglars, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

The would-be victim told *Saipan Tribune* that her husband had just finished eating after arriving from work at 2am

and was about to double-lock the front door when it slowly opened and a machete slipped through the crack. He saw a man holding the machete and immediately slammed the door and shouted for help.

The machete was stuck on the door and the surprised burglar ran away. Witnesses said another man also fled.

The couple learned that the burglar first tried to break into another unit on the same floor that same day. The suspect destroyed the door's screen but failed to get inside because of the lock on the door. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

SHRM meeting on 2012 updates to the Family Medical Leave Act

The Society for Human Resource Management CNMI Chapter will be taking up the "Family Medical Leave Act 2012 Updates" at its March general membership meeting with guest speaker Patrick Candoleta, assistant district director for Guam & Northern Marianas, U.S. Department of Labor.

The lunch meeting will be held at Saipan World Resort (Tapochau Room) on Wednesday, March 28, 2012, from 12pm to 1:30pm (doors will open at 11:30am). This presentation is open to the public and will be an invaluable opportunity for employers and employees to learn the latest information on FMLA and

how it impacts the workplace. Candoleta will present on important topics such as:

1) Extending exigency leave to family members of the Regular Armed Forces.

2) Allowing additional days for employee during a military family member's "rest and recuperation" period.

3) Review of Form WH-381 which covers the Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities for FMLA.

The presentation includes lunch and the cost is \$20 for SHRM members and \$30 for non-members. Seats are limited, so reserve a seat by contacting Polly DLG. Masga at 237-5122 or e-mail her at pollydlg@gmail.com. (*SHRM*)

Tonga king's funeral on March 28

The exact time of arrival will be confirmed later.

Approximately 150 men will be part of a delegation that will deliver the king to his final resting place at the royal burial grounds in Male'eklua, where 10,000 or more people are expected to attend the ceremonies.

Paula Ma'u, the Secretary for Information and Communications, told Matangi Tonga Online that the late king will lie in state at the Royal Palace in Nuku'alofa for two days before his burial.

He said that the body of King George Tupou V will be brought to Tonga on board a special commercial aircraft chartered by the Chinese government, which will fly direct flight from Hong Kong to Fua'amotu International Airport on March 26.

A mourning period of three months have been declared in Tonga, starting from March 19 to June 19, 2012.

APARTMENT AND CONDOMINIUM FOR RENT **Promo Extended**

Until April 30, 2012 (for 1 year contract)

GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM

1-BEDROOM : REG PRICE - \$650.00 **NOW \$500.00 ~**
2-BEDROOM : REG PRICE - \$800.00 **NOW \$650.00 ~**
(Power and Water EXCLUDED)

LOCATION: Lower Miha, GARAPAN, where 747 Dining & Bar is situated

- 24-hr water supply
- Back-up generator
- Common waste container
- Furnished unit w/ balcony
- Free moving-service
- Laundry facility
- On-duty security guard at night
- On-site maintenance
- Parking space
- Swimming pool

ANAKS OCEAN VIEW HILL SAIPAN

AVAILABLE UNITS:
2-Bedroom and 3-Bedroom
PRICE depends upon the type of unit
(Power and Water EXCLUDED)

LOCATION: PUERTO RICO, close to Bank of Hawaii

- 24-hr drinkable (Reverse Osmosis) water supply
- Back-up generator
- Common waste container
- Furnished unit
- Free moving-service
- Laundry facility
- On-duty security guard at night
- On-site maintenance
- Parking space
- Swimming pool
- Tennis court
- Washer and Dryer in the unit

SEDA BLANCA APARTMENT

1-BEDROOM : REG PRICE - \$500.00 **NOW \$400.00 ~**
(Power and Water EXCLUDED)

LOCATION: Lower Miha, GARAPAN, nearby 747 Dining & Bar

- 24-hr water supply
- Back-up generator
- Common waste container
- Furnished unit w/ balcony
- Free moving-service
- Laundry facility
- On-site maintenance
- Parking space

PASTEL INN APARTMENT

STUDIO-TYPE : REG PRICE - \$300.00 **NOW \$250.00 ~**
2-BEDROOM : REG PRICE - \$550.00 **NOW \$400.00 ~**
(Power and Water EXCLUDED)

LOCATION: SAN JOSE, right next to Roshi's Store (along Beach Rd)

AMENITIES:

- 24-hr water supply
- Back-up generator
- Common waste container
- Furnished unit w/ balcony
- Free moving-service
- Laundry facility
- On-site maintenance
- Broad parking space (front area and backside)
- Spacious yard
- Swimming pool w/ BBQ area

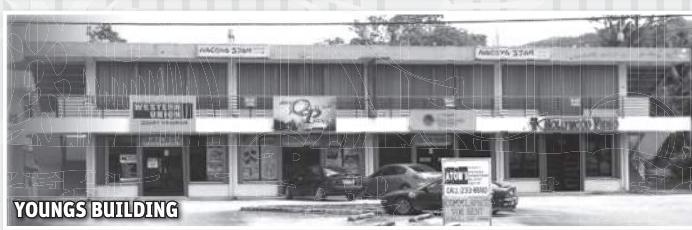
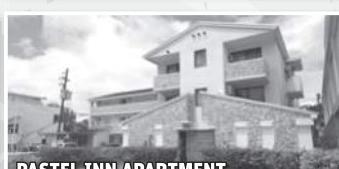
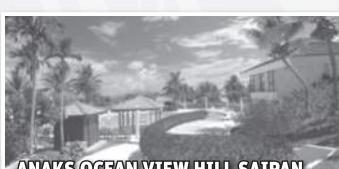
YOUNGS BUILDING

COMMERCIAL SPACE: REG PRICE - \$800.00 **NOW \$500.00 ~**
(Power and Water EXCLUDED)

LOCATION: GARAPAN Middle Road, where Pacific Quick Print is situated
AREA: 760 sq ft per unit (2nd FLOOR ONLY)

AMENITIES:

- Parking space
- Common waste container



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CLARISSA V. DAVID

Triple J Saipan marketing manager Jay Santos, fifth right, hands the \$1,000 donation of Triple J Enterprises to 2012 Marianas March Against Cancer committee members led by overall chair Catherine Attao-Toves in a brief presentation at the Triple J Super Fresh Market yesterday.

Triple J steps up for 2012 MMAC

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Triple J Enterprises, which owns several businesses on island including restaurants, a retail store, and car dealership, is sponsoring for the first time the annual Marianas March Against Cancer in April.

Jay Santos, Triple J Saipan marketing manager, presented the company's \$1,000 donation for this year's event slated for April 27 to 28, 6pm to 6am at the Hopwood Jr. High School field.

Santos, who handed the donation to the 2012 MMAC committee members at the Triple J Super Fresh Market yesterday, thanked and congratulated the committee on behalf of Triple J founder Robert "Bob" Jones and the Jones family for organizing a worthwhile cause.

"Cancer is a horrible thing," said Santos. "Unfortunately, the Triple J family has had members challenged with this disease and it is only fitting that we support this year's MMAC and future functions as well."

"I hope causes like this will help find a cure for cancer which has been around way too long," added Santos.

Catherine Attao-Toves, overall committee chair, said it is always great to have new sponsors come on board to support the largest and signature fund-

raising event of the Commonwealth Cancer Association.

"We greatly appreciate the support and contribution that Triple J is giving us. We thank them for their generosity," she said.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of MMAC, a 12-hour

overnight event that features teams competing for various prizes, selling of luminaries, shirts, and raffle tickets to raise funds to fight cancer in the Commonwealth. For more information, call 285-1828, email attaoc@yahoo.com or visit www.ccamarianas.org.

USCIS biometrics processing on Rota, Tinian

Beginning next month, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will be collecting biometrics information from people who are seeking an immigration benefit on the islands of Rota and Tinian. A USCIS mobile team will process biometrics in Rota from April 2-12; and in Tinian from April 16-May 7.

Individuals on Rota and Tinian will be receiving appointment notices in the coming weeks indicating when and where they must go for their biometrics appointment. Individuals **must** have an appointment notice in order for USCIS to process their biometric information. When USCIS collects a person's photograph, signature, or fingerprints, this is called biometrics collection. The type of biometrics USCIS collects is decided on a case by case basis.

USCIS is the agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that handles immigration benefits. More information can be found at www.

IN BRIEF

USCIS Biometrics Collection on Rota and Tinian

ROTA:

- Monday, April 2 to Friday, April 6
- Monday, April 9 to Thursday, April 12

TINIAN:

- Monday, April 16 to Friday, April 20
- Monday, April 23 to Friday, April 27
- Monday, April 30 to Friday, May 4
- Monday, May 7

Rota

Rota Resort and Country Club (Conference Room, 1st Floor, Building H5)
Rota, MP 96951

Tinian

Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino (the Tinian Room)
One Broadway
Tinian, MP 96952

join us on a fun adventure

saipanair, a new and locally owned airline company, is closing the distance between saipan and japan/china.

now hiring!

60 flight attendants

The position is a multi-task job requiring various skills. The successful candidate will perform important safety, security and service-related responsibilities and interact with a diverse group of customers and fellow employees. He/she must be able to work well independently as well as part of a team. This job requires:

- Minimum 21 years of age
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Basic computer literacy and ability to perform basic math skills
- Minimum of two years direct customer service experience
- Ability to hear, read, write and fluently speak and understand the English language
- Bilingual fluency (ability to speak, read and write) in Chinese Mandarin and Japanese is preferred
- Authorization to work in the United States and possession and maintenance of a valid United States passport or foreign passport with applicable visas
- Ability to pass a FAA-required ten-year work history review and a criminal background check and willingness to submit to fingerprinting
- Ability to comprehend and retain information pertinent to the position
- Ability to pass a rigorous training program
- Willingness to work holidays, weekends, nights and extended hours
- Willingness to work on "reserve" status for a long duration
- Reliable transportation to and from the airport

The summary of essential job functions is as follows:

- Work in accordance with established procedures and performance standards and ensure compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Regulations
- Prepare and serve meals and beverages, sell onboard liquor and duty-free items
- Assist customers with carry-on items
- Ensure safety and comfort of passengers
- Respond and provide leadership during an emergency, including aircraft evacuation and unusual situations (bomb threats, hijackings, delayed flights, severe weather conditions, turbulent flights, etc.)
- Respond to customer medical situations and administer first aid to ill or incapacitated customers
- Maintain order and handle unruly or irate customers
- Work irregular days and hours with the ability to travel to all countries to which Saipan Air flies
- Comply with Saipan Air attendance policy

Additional duties may be added as required by the operational needs of Saipan Air. As Flight Attendants represent Saipan Air to our customers, applicants are expected to have specific qualifications and meet certain requirements:

- Good judgment
- Excellent dependability
- Exceptional interpersonal skills
- Caring and nurturing disposition
- Ability to accept personal responsibility for resolving concerns
- Strong work ethic

- Good service orientation
- Excellent communication skills
- Friendly and polite in all situations
- Ability to handle pressure in stressful situations
- Physical agility and strength for assisting customers and their luggage

Additional job requirements:

- Minimum height of 5'0" and maximum height of 6'3" without shoes
- Height and weight proportionate to maintain professional appearance; body size cannot exceed specific aircraft dimensions (example: jump seat, harness without modification, cabin aisle and emergency exits)
- Vision correctable to 20/40 or better (uncorrected 20/200 or better)
- Push and pull beverage/meal cart (150-250 pounds)
- Lift liquor kit (up to 43 pounds)
- Lift emergency window exit (up to 60 pounds)
- Open emergency door (91-126 pounds stress)

Employment will be contingent upon successful completion of a six to eight-week training program and a post-job offer examination. The FAA requires a drug screening for Flight Attendant applicants. Saipan Air requires employees to submit to drug/alcohol testing randomly throughout their employment. Employment is contingent upon a cleared drug screen according to FAA and Saipan Air standards.

If you meet the above-mentioned qualifications and the employment conditions are acceptable to you, please send your resume to hrdsaipanair@tanholdings.com. Application forms can be obtained at the Job Fair on March 23, 2012 at Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan. Early submission of application documents is highly encouraged.



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The apprenticeship program at NMC

The Northern Marianas College has received many inquiries regarding the increasing popularity of its Apprenticeship Training Program.

In an effort to increase awareness about the program and its benefits, the college emphasized today that Apprenticeship Training Program is an earn-while-you-learn program that focuses on on-the-job training provided by employers combined with related classroom instruction provided by NMC.

The college also indicated that employer standards are developed and used as the training manual of apprentices for the duration of their occupation-in-training. Apprenticeship program staff assists in the development of employer standards to ensure compliance with federal guidelines.

Upon entering the apprenticeship program, an apprentice works a regular workweek with the employer and attends related classroom instruction on a regular, scheduled basis. To ensure program requirements are met and completed, the on-the-job training hours are maintained by the employer, while the related instruction is maintained online by NMC. When apprentices complete the required on-the-job training hours and the classroom instructional hours, they gain a certificate of completion from the U.S. Apprenticeship Program through the U.S. Department of Labor.

Apprentices are required to attend 144 hours of classroom or online instruction per year in their chosen occupation. Prescribed, related courses are identified for each occupation



Power 99 Manager Tina Palacios, center, and staff at Power 99 take time to pose for a photo. Sorenson Pacific will be working with Northern Marianas College to establish an apprentice at the radio station. Power 99 looking for an individual who would like to do script writing, commercials, radio/TV, air time sales and marketing. The person the company sponsors needs to be willing to be trained and wants to learn.

in the employer's standards. Apprentices register for the related instruction to augment skills learned on the job in their occupation.

The length of time for apprenticeship training depends upon the skilled occupation involved, but would normally vary from two years to four years. For example, an office manager/administrative services apprentice must achieve 4,000 on-the-job training hours and complete a minimum of 288 classroom instructional hours to receive a certificate of completion from the U.S. Department of Labor.

In contrast, a telecommunication technician must achieve 8,000 on-the-job training hours

and complete a minimum of 576 classroom instructional hours to receive a certificate of completion.

The benefits of Apprenticeship Training for employers include: 1) Employers who train apprentices invest in their business future and avoid skill shortages, 2) Employers know that better trained employees affect the bottom dollar: skilled employees take less time to produce results, and 3) Employers who train apprentices promote corporate citizenship by supporting a valuable training program.

Currently, NMC has a memorandum of understanding with the CNMI government, coordi-

nated with the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship in Hawaii, to implement the apprenticeship programs.

The college added that the NMC U.S. Apprenticeship program will build the local workforce by stimulating, encouraging and assisting local industries in the development and expansion of apprenticeship and training.

NMC is encouraging members of the business community to contact the college with its specific workforce needs so it can work to facilitate an apprentice arrangement. Contact Geri Willis by calling 234-5498 Ext. 1028 (or by cell: 287-2004) or email geri@nmcnet.edu. (NMC)

Guam native Gumataotao nominated for promotion

EVERETT, Wash.—Rear Adm. Peter A. Gumataotao of Sinajana has been officially recommended for promotion by the president of the United States to the permanent grade of rear admiral, meaning he'll don a second star.

Gumataotao is currently serving as Commander, Carrier Strike Group Eleven, which is based in Everett, Wash. and includes approximately 6,000 officers and sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68), aircraft of Air Wing Eleven, and surface ships and submarines of Destroyer Squadron 23.

"From the onset of my Navy career, I have been blessed with many opportunities. Now that I look back on those days at Father D [Fr. Duenas Memorial High School], it was a bold yet very rewarding decision to leave the island and serve my country."

More than 30 years since leaving Guam, Gumataotao has taken advantage of the many educational and career-enhancing assignments the Navy has afforded him.

Gumataotao joined the Navy in 1976, then attended the U.S.



Rear Adm. Peter A. Gumataotao visits with sailors on board USS *Nimitz* shortly after taking over as commander, Carrier Strike Group Eleven.

Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, R.I., graduated the U.S. Naval Academy in 1981, and earned a master's degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College in 1994. He's also served on several ships and commanded at sea aboard USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), USS Decatur (DDG 73) and served as Commander, Destroyer Squadron 31.

"I've had an amazing ride; visiting places world-wide I could not imagine and meeting people -- some fascinating, others inspiring," Gumataotao said.

All in all, Gumataotao said those he has served with and worked for have helped him along on this naval journey. He attributes much of his success to their support and trust.

"From day one I was taught to work as a team, which resonates well with our culture of 'familia' back home. The Navy is a familia filled with patriots and professionals," Gumataotao said, adding, "I'm proud to say that AnneMarie, my wife, and I have benefitted from the close-knit relationships of Navy families. I honestly

believe we have a welcomed porchlight anywhere there's a sea-port east and west coast."

During his assignment as Commander, Carrier Strike Group Eleven, Gumataotao, expects to complete an at-sea deployment with the strike group.

"I can't begin to express the feeling of being given this privilege to command at-sea again. It is an honor and an opportunity that I do not take lightly. One thing I can assure you, the men and women that serve under my strike group will be ready to respond to our nation's call. I have reminded them to always 'Expect the Unexpected, Be Ready.'

Gumataotao takes his position seriously and hopes to encourage others as he has been encouraged.

"If I can share some straightforward advice to anyone looking for direction -- pursue higher education, strive to do your best in everything you do, hold true to your values no matter what the consequences, and always treat others the way you want to be treated." (USS *Nimitz* Public Affairs)

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Mar. 22, 1999

Governor gives OK for park improvement

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has signed a bill into law that will clear the way for the Commonwealth Development Authority to borrow up to \$2 million from the Marianas Public Land Trust which will be used to improve the American Memorial Park. The law allows CDA to tap portion of the funds held by the MPLT for the much needed development and maintenance of the memorial park subject to the approval of Board of Trustees. MPLT, which has the expending authority over funds received from the United States pursuant to the Covenant and Technical Agreement, can lend only interests generated from the original amount.

SGMA tries to get side to 20/20

The Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association submitted a written statement to Rhonda Schwartz, ABC 20/20's producer, after the news group was recently in Saipan, from March 3-6, filming and conducting interviews for an upcoming national news program, expected to be aired around April 19, 1999. SGMA Executive Director Richard A. Pierce said he "wouldn't expect to see anything much different from their suspiciously awarded portrayal of last year's 'A Day in the Life of Saipan,' aired last April in the US. We doubt there will be any shots of factories except their staged productions photographed through fences again or portray our destitute workers." He added, "we asked to submit a written statement, but I seriously doubt they'll air any of it. We'd give them \$10,000 to read all five paragraphs, but it wouldn't fit the 'broiler plate' script they came in with."

Mar. 22, 2000

Full tax rebate on land compensation OK'd

A measure passed by the House of Representative yesterday will seek a 100 percent rebate on taxes paid on cash compensation involving land transaction between the government and private landowners. Offered by Rep. Heinz S. Hofsneider, House Bill 12-131 will compliment two existing laws that set the mechanism for land exchange and compensation by the government for private properties. But landowners agreeing to buy out of their lots instead of land exchange are required to pay taxes to the CNMI, thereby getting an unfair deal compared with those who want to be compensated with another property.

\$1M fed grants available to fight crimes and violence

The Criminal Justice Planning Agency announces the availability of funds for the STOP Violence Against Women Act, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment, and Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Programs. The CJPA office is the CNMI's administering agency for the VAWA, RSAT, and Byrne programs. The program provides critical drug law enforcement and prosecution resources to state and local government. The BJA requires a pre-approved Program Abstract that meets the program requirements outlined under the Byrne Program 26 Authorized Purpose Areas.

Mar. 22, 2002

Medicaid expenses reach \$10.7M

The CNMI's Medicaid—a government health insurance—has been drowning from indebtedness to the Commonwealth Health Center, as Medicaid expenditures far exceeded the annual budget in recent years. "What we get from the feds—the \$2.1 million for Fiscal Year 2002—is not enough to cover the cost of what our recipients have incurred," said Helen Sablan, Medicaid administrator. Records obtained from the Medicaid office showed that expenditures for the FY 2001 reached more than \$10.71 million, more than \$8 million above the \$2.01-million budget for the fiscal year.

MVA receives \$50K grant

The CNMI received a significant boost in tourism industry yesterday with Gov. Juan N. Babauta accepting a \$50,000 grant awarded by the Office of Insular Affairs. Babauta said that, while he recognizes turning the economy around is costly, he is confident that "with extensive promotion and marketing efforts in place we can rebuild our economy through tourism." Among other tourist-related activities, the grant money will be used by the Marianas Visitors Authority to conduct tourist exit surveys. Documenting such critical statistics have proven successful in past years, enabling MVA to make public policy and to continue to develop business strategies.

Island Snapshots



EXECUTIVES' SUMMIT

From left, Gov. Sebastian Anef (Yap State), Gov. John Ehsa (Pohnpei State), Gov. Benigno R. Fitial (CNMI), President Christopher Loeak (RMI), Gov. Eddie Baza Calvo (Guam), President Emanuel Mori (FSM), President Johnson Toribiong (Palau), Gov. Lyndon Jackson (Kosrae State), and Gov. Johnson Elimo (Chuuk State) have their picture taken at the 17th Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit held at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort last week.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



DONATION

David Sablan and Ed Arriola of Tan Holdings present a \$250 check and \$250 worth of juices and snacks to Senate President Paul Manglona in support of the 2012 Rota Sweet Potato Festival.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



HISTORY PRESENTATION

Ms. Josie Kaipat and CNMI history students attend a special presentation at the American Memorial Park.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



PACIFIC WAR VETERAN

Ret. U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Lawrence "Larry" Snowden talks about his experiences during World War II in a brief presentation at the American Memorial Park Visitors Center Theatre last Thursday.

CLARISSA V. DAVID



WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Right, belated happy anniversary to our loving and supportive parents, Stanley and Zenaida Santos. March 19, 2012, is that special day and after 22 years they still got mad love for each other and made eight wonderful children! Greetings come from your 4 girls MAMOPRES, your four boys SJSS, and your granddaughter Kimani

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



COFFEE CONNECTION

Northern Marianas College Board of Regents chair Juan T. Lizama, standing, answers questions posed by NMC students at the recent "Coffee Connection with NMC's Board of Regents." This event was hosted to afford students an opportunity to meet with the NMC regents and discuss various issues and concerns over coffee and light refreshments.

NMC



TOURISM PRESENTATION

Attendees in the public presentation about the CNMI Tourism Master Plan for 2012-2016 listen to a participant as he asks event speakers Lynn Knight and Art Smith of Management Analysis Inc. at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy birthday to my loving husband, Deo Maneze! May the good Lord bless you with many more healthy and happy years to come. We love you! Lois, Andee, and Gabriel.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Happy 17th birthday to Janece Mae C. Salas! We love you! Greetings come from Dad, Mom, Julia, John and all your Concepcion/Crisostomo/Villagomez/Salas families and the AZ AT-MARAO family too!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Publish and perish?

Late last year came word that a Dutch scientist had genetically tweaked one of the world's most deadly bird flu viruses to make it more contagious to humans. In other words, a doomsday virus in a sneeze that could kill more than half of the people who caught it.

That chilling revelation set off an international furor over whether the details of that study and a similar one done by researchers at the University of Wisconsin at Madison should be published in scientific journals.

Scientists argued that researchers need those details to better detect and fight a possible epidemic of the virus, known as H5N1. Security experts argued compellingly that the studies should be expunged of key details, lest terrorists use that information to unleash a devastating biological weapon.

Another fear if those details escape the lab: There are thousands of do-it-yourself biologists who can buy sophisticated devices to duplicate segments of DNA on eBay. Might they be tempted to recreate the killer virus, known as H5N1, in their garage labs, just for kicks?

Terrorists with petri dishes. Garage biologists creating DIY deadly mutant viruses. That's scary.

So far, the journals *Science* and *Nature* have not published the studies, at the behest of the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity, a panel of experts that advises federal health officials.

But that could change soon. A panel of biologists assembled by the World Health Organization recommended recently that the full details of the experiments eventually be released, although WHO didn't set a timetable.

Talk about publish and perish.

One reason for the WHO decision: Ron Fouchier, the Dutch scientist who created the virus, now says it isn't nearly as dangerous or contagious as people have been led to believe. He says there are "a lot of misperceptions about what you can and cannot conclude from these studies." Hmm. Should we believe him now or should we believe his earlier statements, in which he said of his results: "This is very bad news, indeed."

The United States has refused to join the WHO consensus until the national biosecurity advisory board reviews the new evidence.

Smart move, given the immense confusion about what the studies show and the security risk they pose. There is no hurry to disclose this information to the world now, if ever.

We know that some researchers believe it is already too late, that enough details have circulated among scientists for them to deduce the recipe for the virus. "The present decision to stop publication is closing the barn door after the horse has bolted," Northwestern University biology professor Robert Lamb tells us.

We also know many researchers argue that censoring this study makes it harder to identify changes that might signal a virus is developing the ability to cause a pandemic. That's a powerful argument.

We oppose government censorship. We see how these studies could help scientists devise battle plans should H5N1 mutate on its own to become widely contagious—it isn't right now—or be unleashed by terrorists.

Science works best when information flows freely.

In this case, however, the scientific journals should recognize that not publishing all the details of this research is in the public interest. Scrub the reports.

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2012 is about you!

In the quiet corner of your mind, you ponder the economy's dismal condition. Such condition has sent most families to the brink of destruction. You dig and probe to understand what went wrong. Your assessment seems as common among folks in the villages. You take it a bit further saying, "but they promised to improve the livelihood of the common people."

But as we probe the myriad of issues unsuccessfully, we often ignore that the issue returns, time and again, to the three people you know best: me, myself and I. How did you vote in recent past hoping for real change? Did you slide into the boat of comfort that prolongs nepotism to your own detriment? Isn't it time to take a step back and resolve never to repeat history? It's all in the palm of your hands. And real change begins with the self.

Personally, I'd like to see real credentials, you know, education and level. I'm not talking about your experience as a checker with a shipping firm or your stint with Customs Division. Real credentials enable governance in the complex field of policymaking to grant initial indication of success or failure from the outset. It's sufficient material to give voters a glimpse of your likelihood succeeding as a policymaker or just an unheralded Occupant of Seat in Chamber.

Issues for aspirants

As the various camps review their list of political trade horses, the folks in the villages have started their tummy chuckles, pondering what the guys have to offer this midterm election.

Most assuredly, the likely prospects know that this midterm election is a bit different and that governance will be far more critical than in past elections.

The economy is sliding further south into complete bankruptcy, the adverse effect on households here has not only been painfully adverse but apocalyptically on the brink of total disaster. It has forced underemployment (victims of work-hour reduction), unemployment, an imperiled Fund placing some 6,000 retirees on the brink of abject poverty or destitution; an underfunded healthcare system threatening the health and livelihood of our people; and a future riddled with uncertainty on every corner.

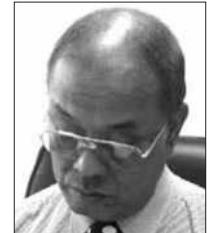
If you're an incumbent (Covenant or Republican), what have you done to mitigate any of the substantive issues mentioned above? Did you find some space in your frontal lobotomy to push for a proactive review of these issues in concert with the administration? For newcomers, do you have the credentials to deal with these issues with some common decency? Do you understand them and can you, in fact, articulate them publicly? And if you think you can bluff it, can you explain your position in the vernacular so we probe the validity and credibility of your oral dissertation?

You see, the CNMI is now at the crossroads of either making it or breaking it in forging positive policy decisions relating to every issue listed above. We can no longer surrender them to political

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.



neophytes. This has worked adversely against governance and hope that you the voter would see it clearly too.

Hope you see and make a difference in who you select to handle matters of state with credentials and relevant experience. We need independent thinkers who could articulate issues as they are presented for review, floor debates, and disposition. If you don't have it, do you really have the gall to ask for my vote? Not ready to promote incompetence in perpetuity!

■ ■ ■

Over the last 40 years, I've seen assorted political stripes march in and out of office promising to uphold the laws and constitution of the U.S. and the NMI. Most aren't even familiar with the first principles or its history, supremacy of laws, or any inkling that theirs is policymaking. No idea either that it is in what they set down as matters of policy that would prepare or derail the CNMI from moving forward or advancing to the rear. Well, there's no one around to blame except "We the Voters" for playing up nepotism since time immemorial. Are we ready to make a repeat of history this time around?

Why Romney is a difficult pick

Many of us have set our eyes on the national Republican race to understand what's behind each candidate. Specifically, we want to know each individual's ability to relate, via life-changing experiences, to a majority of Americans across the country.

Frontrunner Mitt Romney may be ahead of the three folks eyeing the national GOP nomination. But I find him a difficult person to relate to for he seems a bit too scripted but fits the crisp white shirt and blue suit more than anything else. It isn't his fault that he never had any life-changing experiences other than his grand success at wealth and jobs creation.

Columnist and author Jeff Greenfield had this to say: "He must show his *human* side, he must connect with *real* people, he must *define* himself more clearly, he must offer us a compelling vision of why he wants to be president."

Lurking beneath the surface of these concerns is a more fundamental one that no amount of repositioning or "messaging" can fix,

See 2012 on Next Page

Letters to the Editor

The CNMI could have a bright future

Let me briefly explain that I have lived in the CNMI for over 10 years and I am 74 years old. That means that I do not know a lot about the CNMI and that I am old, so take what I say with a grain of salt. That said, I have also been an observer of the goings on in the CNMI. I have written letters to the editor, attended Legislature meetings, attended court trials, participated in various public service committees, joined the Chamber of Commerce, worked with a team on the future, attended public hearings, and talked with many of our elected leaders. These activities have brought me into contact with many of the people who are the “movers and shakers” living in the CNMI. I have met enough people I know that a bright future is coming through the people to the CNMI.

There are smart, capable people in all age groups, living in all the villages and on all the islands. I am particularly impressed with the younger generation, those 50 years old and younger. Many have excellent educations, have traveled globally, ran businesses, taught in schools, been in government, and served the people through the military and volunteer work. They really know what makes these islands tick, and they can make the needed changes for our future in the CNMI, if only given the opportunity. For example the first names of a few people that come to my mind that are in the group of future change agents are: Ed, Alex, Vince, Doug, Tina, Galvin, Marian, Dave, Vickie, Jim, Steve, Tony, Michael, Arnold, Jay, etc., etc. The point of this list is to make the point that the CNMI has many outstanding leaders, most of your readers will be able to put a last name with their first. We as a community need to seek the best to run our government and the outstanding ones must be encouraged to run for political offices. We must recruit the best leaders to get the best results for our people! We will reap what we sow; weak people in government produce poor results! The choice is up to the people who vote. For example, drinking buddies, cousins, uncles, and friends are not qualifications to be leaders, they have got to bring some skills, capabilities, honesty and “heart” to the ballot and if elected to the government.

Recently, the governor called the senators of Tinian and Rota “stupid.” My mother taught me that calling people stupid was impolite and I have never done such a thing. The Senate is made up of representatives from all the islands and I assume that the governor thinks that there are stupid people in all the Senate (including Saipan) and probably the House too. I may be wrong but it seems that stupid people disagree with the governor and that they should be “punished”—his words not mine. I hope with all my heart that this event will be a “tipping point” and that the public will finally “tip” to make changes in their habits of electing the same kind of people, time after time. Remember we reap what we sow. Even the governor said the people elected “stupid” senators. The list of people that are above are hard working, intelligent, outstanding human beings. Let’s get some of them in our government. Your readers know these people, we have a huge choice of great people to choose from for the elections coming in November.

Let’s take a look at just a few of the issues going on in the CNMI,

2012

From Page 10

he related. “Put simply, it is that Mitt Romney is ill-equipped to embrace the Republican Party’s favorite argument: that its candidate best embodies the values and attributes of the American electorate—or, at least, the part of the country that Sarah Palin called “the Real America.”

“But a Republican candidate who cannot present that gut-level argument bears a special burden. And in the case of Mitt Romney, the burden is particularly heavy,” said Greenfield.

Former Speaker Newt Gingrich is the only presidential bet that sent Obama squirming on energy. He forced him into a corner where the president was quibbling. “What about the use of algae?” Gingrich almost always presents explanation of substance to the delight of voters of various stripes. He strikes at what the country needs now from one with true presidential leadership, not one who’s still confused over his own ill-defined policies and imperiled presidency being dragged down by protracted economic recovery to gasoline prices headed toward \$4-5 per gallon. Articulate as he may be, strange how he’s missed discussing the first principles that made our country great since its founding some 236 years ago.

My problem with Rick Santorum is his loss in his own Pennsylvania that obviates the question: If he can’t win at home, what are his chances of raking in national support for his presidential aspiration? I like Ron Paul for his libertarian views if and, only if, those views are limited to academia. He means well but he’d get us into trouble with the international community. Gingrich would be Obama’s nightmare in any and all debates and any encounter would send the latter looking for the exit door in the backroom. But Romney’s salvation rests with what’s known as the vote of “inevitability.”

things like the poor execution of CHC, a corporation failing from the start. The people on Saipan rejected casinos twice at the polls, but our government leaders keep pushing for casinos. I have asked many people if they are proud of the 17th Legislature; 100 percent say no in private but in public they say nothing. What is wrong? Why are they afraid? When will CUC be taken private? How many more years will it take? The zoning debate is not logical. For example, in a recent letter to the editor from a famous House member, he proved with hard data that people did not come out to the public hearings. They sat back and let the leaders decide for them. This kind of community activity will result in failure. It seems that the people are to blame, the governor is to blame, our legislators are to blame. The CNMI is failing and it is time to change!

Perhaps the governor is right, there may be “stupid” people in government. Whose responsibility is that? The people, that’s who!

Frank Stewart
Capital Hill, Saipan

Repeal Article 12: The alternative to casinos

The strongest proponents for the legalization of casinos in the Northern Mariana Islands feel strongly that casinos will solve the islands’ problems. Proponents of casinos have often asked the community to either join them in supporting the gambling industry or to give alternative suggestions that will save our islands from economic ruin which they believe only casinos can do.

The people of the CNMI have repeatedly rejected the legalization of casinos in the CNMI and tourists have not indicated gambling as a top reason for coming to the islands, further validating the notion that gambling is not the solution. One thing we can agree on, however, is that the CNMI needs investors.

The alternative to casinos is to make the CNMI a place that investors want to come to. Investors will only come if they know it is safe to make an investment here. Repealing Article 12 will do just that. Resolving the issues of landownership can make it inviting for investors to consider buying the old dilapidated garment factories and abandoned buildings that may have 20 years remaining on their leases. As it is now, these unsightly buildings will remain for many years to come. Our laws deter investments as no one will put serious money into a property they cannot own.

Repealing Article 12 opens doors for many winning solutions that will not only bring in much needed tax dollars but will also add to the aesthetics of our islands. Let’s make sure our tourists are well taken care of and that when they drive around the islands they will notice not only the natural beauty but the beautiful neighborhoods, stores, restaurants and other establishments. We have viable government agencies such as the Zoning Board, the Department of Public Works, and Department of Environmental Quality that will help ensure quality projects.

Repealing Article 12 is an alternative to casinos in the CNMI and opens doors to endless possibilities.

Efrain F. Camacho
Navy Hill, Saipan

To the real author of ‘Shame on you’”

If you want to make a statement and be heard, don’t be a coward and hide behind someone else’s name, because you are only displaying fear. For your information, I have sought legal advice and trust me it will not end with this letter. The title that you use “Shame on you” just reflects on your action, so shame on you! It is pointless to criticize the governor of using such a word when you yourself is doing the same thing but worse because you are destroying someone’s name, shame on you! At least, the governor is brave enough to show his face. My family and I are very upset. Not only did you use my name for whatever gain but to use it to insult someone else, shame on you! I am confident that the people who know me know that I am not that naïve to write such a thing. Many people are disappointed with the governor’s choice of words but only a coward would write a letter to *Saipan Tribune* and use someone else’s name, shame on you! I wasn’t even born before the ’70s, and whatever happened before I was born is not of interest to me. So whoever you are shame on you!

Na’gai respetu hao yan gai mamalao.

Janry A. Santos
Teneto Village, Rota

Retirement Fund is doomed—if...

The Retirement Fund will be doomed to extinction if it is turned over to a receivership. I’m sure the judge will have plenty of *just causes* to turn the Fund over to a receiver if nothing is done to change the present diagnosis of certain death. The analysis has been done and numerous solutions have been offered and the only question is if the board is going to do something or are they going to just let it happen. As you can see, the word “if” can be one of the biggest words in the English language with a plethora of ramifications both good and bad.

I would prefer to focus on the positives of this “if” as the only alternative is the death of the Fund, which is imminent if nothing is done to save the patient. I wasn’t at the court but I did my homework and there were a number of good ideas offered to save the Fund and the willingness of some retirees to even accept a 50-percent plus decrease. I know a lot of the retirees can’t afford this much but everyone will need to pitch in their fair share if the Fund is to survive. So there is hope if a plan can be created that is acceptable by the retirees and implemented.

Like I have said on so many occasions, the CNMI is slow and even nonfunctioning when it comes to doing our homework and getting the job done. Heck, we can’t even spend free money. If it weren’t for the feds I don’t even want to think about how awful things would be when I see “federally funded” everywhere and *taya* [none] CNMI funded. But back to the point. Creating the plan to save the Fund is going to require doing homework if someone will do it, and getting the retirees to buy into the plan is going to take genuine leadership if there is someone not tied to the politics of the Fund that the retirees can trust to lead. More importantly the plan is going to take implementing, which I’m sure will require legislative action—if we can get our leaders to work collectively and to act expeditiously to fix the problem before the patient dies.

As a retiree, I have a vested interest in the Fund and I truly want to see the Fund survive so I can’t just sit around and watch it die and do nothing. I believe the most important task for the board at this point is getting the right person to lead and oversee the rehabilitation process. The Fund has consultants for advice and crunching numbers but it also desperately needs a consultant that can think outside the box and put a rehabilitation plan together and execute it—if they get the chance. I can easily guarantee this will be another “I told you so” if the Fund can’t bring the retirees together as one people headed in the same direction to help the Retirement Fund board with a legitimate plan to rehabilitate the Fund. The one-people-one-direction that I use so much does indeed have real and severe consequences as we will all find prosperity together or we will all perish like fools. This scenario reminds me of a scene in the *Godfather* because it is either all retirees help to save the Fund or the Fund will die, which is truly an offer we can’t refuse!

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

A land of our own

We NMDs only have these small islands to call home. It’s the only place we’ve called home for several hundred years. In fact, Spanish, Germans, Japanese, and others have all tried to push us off this soil, but this is the only soil we know. If Article 12 is abolished, allowing non-NMDs to buy our land, where will we NMDs go? Will we be reduced to a wandering people, without land, and without a home?

These little rocks are all we have. The world is very big for non-NMD investors. I’m sure many other places would love to have their money and would love to sell their land to them. As for us, we are happy where we are. Please let us live out our lives on these little specks in the ocean that we call home.

Our wise past leaders designed the Covenant with this in mind. They didn’t want our home taken over by outsiders. The U.S. Constitution applies in the CNMI only to the extent that the Covenant allows it. And the Covenant allows most of the U.S. Constitution, but specifically exempts the CNMI from equal protection of landownership.

Maybe for some people, a quick profit is more important than having a place to live. I know that those people support repealing Article 12. But the sound and wise decision for us NMDs is to have a place to live, even if it means giving up short-term windfalls, instead of becoming homeless in our own islands.

Let us have Article 12 to let us NMDs keep the only home we’ve ever known.

Diego C. Blanco
As Lito, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.pr.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota Thundershowers	▲ 86 ▼ 77
Palau Thunderstorms	▲ 86 ▼ 78
Yap Showers	▲ 88 ▼ 78
Chuuk Thunderstorms	▲ 90 ▼ 79
Pohnpei Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 80
Kosrae Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 80
Majuro Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 79

Around The Globe

Auckland Showers	▲ 69 ▼ 66
Beijing Windy	▲ 53 ▼ 33
Hong Kong Showers	▲ 73 ▼ 58
Honolulu Showers	▲ 78 ▼ 71
London Partly Cloudy	▲ 59 ▼ 44
Los Angeles Mostly Sunny	▲ 68 ▼ 51
Manila Thundershowers	▲ 90 ▼ 80
Melbourne Showers	▲ 59 ▼ 50
Miami Partly Cloudy	▲ 82 ▼ 70
New York Partly Cloudy	▲ 79 ▼ 57
Osaka Showers	▲ 53 ▼ 47
Paris Showers	▲ 64 ▼ 42
Pusan Showers	▲ 53 ▼ 40
Rome Partly Cloudy	▲ 69 ▼ 50
Salem Ice	▲ 48 ▼ 30
San Francisco Showers	▲ 56 ▼ 45
Seoul Showers	▲ 48 ▼ 34
Tokyo Showers	▲ 53 ▼ 46
Washington, DC Partly Cloudy	▲ 79 ▼ 60

Tides

Sunrise/Sunset

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:20 AM	6:28 PM	Today	5:42 AM	6:09 PM
Friday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM	Friday	6:20 AM	6:57 PM
Saturday	6:18 AM	6:28 PM	Saturday	6:58 AM	7:45 PM
Sunday	6:18 AM	6:29 PM	Sunday	7:37 AM	8:34 PM
Monday	6:17 AM	6:29 PM	Monday	8:19 AM	9:23 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

■ ISLAND SNAPSHOT Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

■ BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

■ BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

■ SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

■ TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan

To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

C05062 2:10am 2:40am 1, 5

SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)

C05064 4:15am 4:50am 1, 5

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

C05064 4:15am 5:45am 1, 5 via ROP

C05070 4:35am 5:25am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

C05068 8:25am 9:15am Daily

C05074 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7

C05076 3:10pm 4:00pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05078 6:50pm 7:40pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05078 7:00pm 7:50pm 3, 6

C05072 9:55pm 10:45pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05072 10:05pm 10:55pm 3, 6

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

C05064 5:15am 5:45am 1, 5

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)

C05062 3:10am 3:45am 1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

C05062 2:10am 3:45am 1, 5 via ROP

C05069 2:45am 3:35am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

C05071 7:00am 7:50am Daily

C05073 10:05am 10:55am 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05075 1:40pm 2:30pm 1, 4, 5, 7

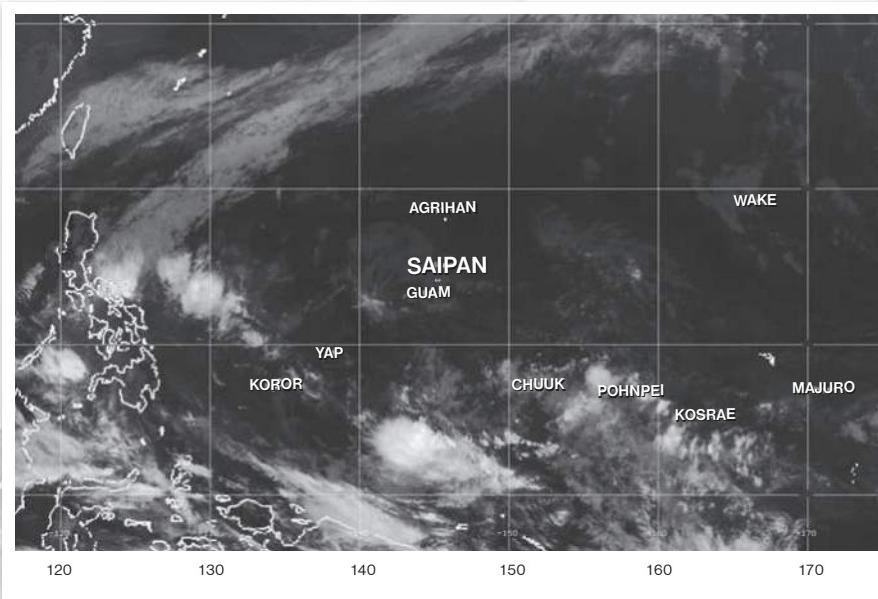
C05077 5:30pm 6:20pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05077 5:40pm 6:30pm 3, 6

C05079 8:35pm 9:25pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05079 8:45pm 9:35pm 3, 6

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2012

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough stretches from near 7N130E to 3N137E to a circulation located southwest of Chuuk near 2N147E then continues to southwest of Kosrae near 4N162E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring near the circulation between the equator and 5N from 141E to 153E. Scattered showers associated with the trough cover portions of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae states 150 miles of a line that extends from 8N150E to 2N169E. Converging winds north of the trough are producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms 120 miles either side of a line that extends between Palau and Yap from 13N130E to 7N138E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers across the Marshalls between 4N and 7N from 170E to 180. A trade-wind disturbance is producing low clouds and a few showers over the Marianas between 11N and 17N from 140E and 145E. A second trade-wind disturbance is generating low clouds and a few showers east of the Marianas between 13N and 18N from 152E to 162E.

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

C05067/721 2:10am 12:00pm 1 via ICN

C05067/721 2:40am 12:00pm 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN

C05070/721 4:35am 9:45am 3, 6 via GUM

DL287/721 6:00am 10:25pm Daily via NRT

C05068/721 8:25am 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM

C05068/721 8:25am 9:40pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

C05076/721 3:10pm 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM

C05076/721 3:10pm 9:40pm 1, 4, 7 via GUM

C05076/721 3:10pm 11:00pm 2, 5 via GUM-Palau

C05076/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN

C05072/PR111 9:55pm 7:50am+1 1, 5, 7 via GUM

C05072/PR111 10:05pm 7:50am+1 3, 6 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ724/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN

OZ750/603 1:00am 2:20pm Daily via ICN

OZ722/605 1:

Business

Employers ask job seekers for Facebook passwords

SEATTLE (AP)—When Justin Bassett interviewed for a new job, he expected the usual questions about experience and references. So he was astonished when the interviewer asked for something else: his Facebook username and password.

Bassett, a New York City statistician, had just finished answering a few character questions when the interviewer turned to her computer to search for his Facebook page. But she couldn't see his private profile. She turned back and asked him to hand over his login information.

Bassett refused and withdrew his application, saying he didn't want to work for a company that would seek such personal information. But as the job market steadily improves, other job candidates are confronting the same question from prospective employers, and some of them cannot afford to say no.

In their efforts to vet applicants, some companies and government agencies are going beyond merely glancing at a person's social networking profiles and instead asking to log in as the user to have a look around.

"It's akin to requiring someone's house keys," said Orin Kerr, a George Washington University law professor and former federal prosecutor who calls it "an egregious privacy violation."

Questions have been raised about the legality of the practice, which is also the focus of proposed legislation in Illinois and Maryland that would forbid public agencies from asking for access to social networks.



AP
Robert Collins of Baltimore poses for a photo Friday, March 16, 2012 at Cybourn Arboretum in Baltimore. When Collins returned from a leave of absence from his job as a security guard with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services in 2010, he was asked for his Facebook login and password during a reinstatement interview, purportedly so the agency could check for any gang affiliations. He was stunned by the request but complied.

Since the rise of social networking, it has become common for managers to review publicly available Facebook profiles, Twitter accounts and other sites to learn more about job candi-

dates. But many users, especially on Facebook, have their profiles set to private, making them available only to selected people or certain networks.

Companies that don't ask

for passwords have taken other steps—such as asking applicants to friend human resource managers or to log in to a company computer during an interview. Once employed, some workers have been required to sign non-disparagement agreements that ban them from talking negatively about an employer on social media.

Asking for a candidate's password is more prevalent among public agencies, especially those seeking to fill law enforcement positions such as police officers or 911 dispatchers.

Back in 2010, Robert Collins was returning to his job as a correctional officer at the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services after taking a leave following his mother's death. During a reinstatement interview, he was asked for his login and password, purportedly so the agency could check for any gang affiliations. He was stunned by the request but complied.

"I needed my job to feed my family. I had to," he recalled.

After the ACLU complained about the practice, the agency amended its policy, asking instead for job applicants to log in during interviews.

"To me, that's still invasive. I can appreciate the desire to learn more about the applicant, but it's still a violation of people's personal privacy," said Collins, whose case inspired Maryland's legislation.

Until last year, the city of Bozeman, Mont., had a long-standing policy of asking job

applicants for passwords to their email addresses, social-networking websites and other online accounts.

And since 2006, the McLean

County, Ill., sheriff's office has been one of several Illinois sheriff's departments that ask applicants to sign into social media sites to be screened.

Rescue creditors: Greece may miss its debt target

BERLIN (AP)—Greece's international creditors see "significant risks" that the country might fail to bring down its debt burden within targets, meaning it would require more rescue loans.

In a document seen by The Associated Press on Tuesday, they say Greece's program of austerity measures and structural reforms "could be accident prone."

"Authorities may not be able to implement reforms at the pace envisioned," said the report by the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank.

The Greek program could lower debt to 116.5 percent of GDP by 2020, but the minimum target set by the bailout creditors is 120.5 percent by 2020.

On top of concerns that reforms are too slow, the Greek economy faces a grim outlook. It is in its fifth year of recession and would need to recover before debt reduction plans can have much effect.

The Bank of Greece predicts the economy will contract another 4.5 percent in 2012 and remain in recession next year, while unemployment will surpass 19 percent on average this year.

Overall, the bailout creditors' report sees a risk that the pro-

gram would bring debt down to only 145.5 percent of GDP by 2020, even after taking into account losses accepted by private creditors.

"Stress tests point to a number of sensitivities, with the balance of risks mostly tilted to the downside," said the report dated March 11.

"Greater wage flexibility may in practice be resisted by economic agents; product and service market liberalization may continue to be plagued by strong opposition from vested interests; and business environment reforms may also remain bogged down in bureaucratic delays," it reads.

Moreover, Greece is heading toward a general election in late April or early May, likely causing further delays to reforms. A new government might take also seek to change the terms of the bailout program.

"It may take Greece much more time than assumed to identify and implement the necessary structural fiscal reforms," the document says. Revenue from selling state assets may also fall behind expectations "due to market-related constraints, encumbrances on assets, or political hurdles," it notes.

Report: Just \$31B from Buffett rule tax on rich

WASHINGTON (AP)—A bill designed to enact President Barack Obama's plan for a "Buffett rule" tax on the wealthy would rake in just \$31 billion over the next 11 years, according to an estimate by Congress' official tax analysts obtained by The Associated Press.

That figure would be a drop in the bucket of the over \$7 trillion in federal budget deficits projected during that period. It is also minuscule compared to the many hundreds of billions it would cost to repeal the alternative minimum tax, which Obama's budget last month said he would replace with the Buffett rule tax.

The alternative minimum tax, originally aimed at ensuring that wealthy Americans

pay taxes despite deductions and other breaks, has begun affecting upper middle-class families. Congress acts every year to minimize its impact.

The Buffett rule has become a leading symbol of Obama's and congressional Democrats' election-year efforts to persuade voters that they are the party championing economic fairness. Republicans have mocked it as one aimed at scoring political points that would have little real budgetary impact.

The plan is named for billionaire investor Warren Buffett, who has said taxes on the rich are too low. Obama has proposed requiring that people earning at least \$1 million annually pay at least 30 percent of their income in taxes, but

has provided few details.

In an analysis provided to The AP on Tuesday, Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation estimated that a bill introduced last month by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., attempting to enshrine Obama's proposal into law would collect \$31 billion through 2022. The measure has little chance of advancing soon, especially before the November elections.

Late Tuesday, Seth Larson, a spokesman for the senator, said his office had received a revised estimate from the joint committee projecting that the tax change would net the government \$47 billion over that same period of time. Larson said the increase was due to a technical change, but he said

he could not immediately describe what that change was.

"Now that we have this analysis, I hope the president will stop the class warfare and start leading by putting out real proposals to bring down our debt, get rid of the AMT and reform our broken tax code," Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, top Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, said in a written statement, using the alternative minimum tax's acronym.

Hatch's Finance committee GOP aides requested the study.

Whitehouse said other groups, including the respected bipartisan Tax Policy Center, have estimated that the proposal could earn more than \$31 billion.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

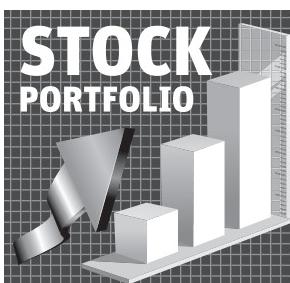
Asia stocks lower on signs of slowing China growth

BANGKOK (AP)—Asian stock markets were mostly lower Wednesday as data suggesting a slowdown in China raised concerns that its economy might not have the momentum needed to help sustain a global recovery. In Japan, export-reliant companies like Toyota Motor Corp. felt pressure as the dollar gave up some of its recent gains against the yen. The Nikkei 225 index fell 0.2 percent to 10,120.63. South Korea's Kospi index dropped 0.3 percent to 2,035.34. In Australia, where economic growth is tightly bound to sales of its raw materials to China, the

S&P/ASX 200 was 0.1 percent lower at 4,273.80.

Oil rises to near \$107 after US crude supply drop

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices rose to near \$107 a barrel Wednesday in Asia after a report showed U.S. crude supplies fell unexpectedly, a sign demand may be improving. Benchmark oil for May delivery was up 52 cents to \$106.59 a barrel at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell \$2.49 to settle at \$106.07 per barrel in New York on Tuesday after Saudi Arabia said it could pump more oil to cover any shortages.



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

13,170.19
-68.94
-0.52%

S&P

1,405.52
-4.23
-0.30%

NASDAQ

3,074.15
-4.17
-0.14%

EXCHANGE RATES

Australian Dollar	0.9535
British Pound	0.6299
Canadian Dollar	0.9896
Chinese Yuan	6.3240
Euro	0.7537

Hong Kong Dollar 7.7638

Indian Rupee 50.5550

Indonesian Rupiah 9,174.00

Japanese Yen 83.7160

Malaysian Ringgit 3.0830

New Zealand Dollar 1.2213

Philippine Peso 43.0500

Singapore Dollar 1.2643

South Korean Won 1,129.96

Swiss Franc 0.9089

Taiwan Dollar 29.5520

Thailand Baht 30.7700

Nation

Romney routs Santorum in GOP primary in Illinois

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. (AP)—Mitt Romney took a major stride toward the Republican presidential nomination Tuesday night, routing Rick Santorum in the Illinois primary for his third big-state win in a row and padding his already-formidable lead in the race for convention delegates.

"What a night," Romney exulted to cheering supporters in suburban Chicago. Looking beyond his GOP rivals, he said he had a simple message for President Barack Obama, the man Republicans hope to defeat next fall: "Enough. We've had enough."

Returns from 98 percent of Illinois' precincts showed Romney gaining 47 percent of the

vote compared to 35 percent for Santorum, 9 percent for Ron Paul and 8 percent for a fading Newt Gingrich.

That was a far more substantial showing for Romney than the grudging victories he eked out in the previous few weeks in Michigan and Ohio, primaries that did as much to raise questions about his ability to attract Republican support as to quell those questions.

Santorum, who hopes to rebound in next Saturday's Louisiana primary, sounded like anything but a defeated contender as he spoke to supporters in Gettysburg, Pa. He said he had outpolled Romney in downstate Illinois and the areas "that conservatives and

Republicans populate. We're very happy about that and we're happy about the delegates we're going to get, too."

"Saddle up, like (Ronald) Reagan did in the cowboy movies," he urged his backers.

Romney triumphed in Illinois after benefiting from a crushing, 7-1 advantage in the television advertising wars, and as his chief rival struggled to overcome self-imposed political wounds in the marathon race to pick an opponent to Obama.

Most recently, Santorum backpedaled after saying on Monday that the economy wasn't the main issue of the campaign. "Occasionally you say some things where you wish

you had a do-over," he said later.

Over the weekend, he was humbled in the Puerto Rico primary after saying that to qualify for statehood the island commonwealth should adopt English as an official language.

Romney's victory was worth at least 41 delegates in Illinois, while Santorum won 10. The two rivals were battling for the final three delegates but the results were too close to call on election night.

Romney has 563 in the overall count maintained by The Associated Press, out of 1,144

needed to win the nomination. Santorum has 263 delegates, Gingrich 135 and Paul 50.

Exit polls showed Romney preferred by primary goers who said the economy was the top issue in the campaign, and overwhelmingly favored by those who said an ability to defeat Obama was the quality they most wanted in a nominee.

He won among voters who said they were somewhat conservative or moderate, while Santorum prevailed among those who said they were "very conservative."

While pre-primary polls taken several days ago in Illinois suggested a close race, Romney and Restore Our Future, a super Pac that backs him, unleashed a barrage of campaign ads to erode Santorum's standing. One ad accused the former Pennsylvania senator of changing his principles while serving in Congress, while two others criticized him for voting to raise the debt limit, raise his own pay as a lawmaker and side with former Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton to support legislation allowing felons the right to vote.

Afghanistan suspect had shaky business dealings

CINCINNATI (AP)—The U.S. suspect in the slaughter of 16 villagers in Afghanistan has a trail of shaky financial dealings—from working in penny-stock boiler rooms that drew numerous client complaints, to an unpaid \$1.5 million fraud judgment, to a failed investment partnership with a former high school football teammate, records show.

Staff Sgt. Robert Bales joined the Army in 2001 after a Florida investment business failed and after he had worked with a string of securities operations with one company official now barred from trading in Ohio. That broker and Bales were socked in 2003 with a \$1.5 million arbitration ruling after an elderly couple charged that their holdings were decimated.

Bales responded to another client complaint by saying the company officer, Michael Patterson, had wrongly blamed Bales for bad trades for an elderly client.

Bales, 38, is being held in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., while a military investigation continues into the nighttime rampage in Afghanistan. His attorney said Tuesday he expects the

case to be lengthy.

"Everyone has financial problems," attorney John Henry Browne said Tuesday of Bales' money problems, including a planned sale of his Seattle-area home for \$50,000 less than he and his wife paid for it in 2005. "But you don't go around killing innocent women and children over financial problems."

Bales' investment career—from 1996 to 2001—followed the rise and fall of the tech stock bubble, which burst in 2001, causing an historic stock-market crash months before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. After college, he worked for a web of companies accused of numerous petty financial frauds, records show. Bales shuttled between five different companies tied to the same principals until 2000, when he founded the doomed venture with former NFL player Marc Edwards.

Bales joined the Army two months after Sept. 11, after a Florida business dissolved and 18 months after the Ohio couple charged him with fraud, unauthorized trading and breach of financial responsibility. That complaint was upheld in a 2003

arbitration. A second complaint in Ohio charged him with unauthorized trading.

Records show Bales told the state in that case that the trades were done by a company principal who "told the elderly client they were my responsibility" but that they were carried out after he had left the company, called MPI Financial.

Records show he never responded to the complaint that led to the \$1.5 million judgment, issued a few months before he went on his first of three tours in Iraq.

Patterson, who ran a company called Michael Patterson Inc., is barred from dealing with securities in the state, Ohio Department of Commerce records show.

Patterson's former attorney said Tuesday he didn't know how to contact him.

Public filings with an industry regulator show Bales was registered to sell investments for five companies that appear to have been fronts for the same group: Hamilton-Shea, Quantum Capital, Michael Patterson Inc. (MPI), Capital Securities of America and Quantum Securities Corp.

ACROSS THE NATION

Immigration rally blocks Phoenix road; 6 arrested

PHOENIX (AP)—The organizers of a rally in a Phoenix intersection to protest Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio's (ar-PEYE'-ohs) immigration policies say police have arrested six participants. The protesters included students from Trevor Browne High School and other area high schools and colleges. They rallied Tuesday in the intersection of 75th Avenue and Cheery Lynn Street, forcing police to close 75th Avenue in both directions. The protest began on a street corner but moved into the street by 3:15 p.m. Phoenix police say the protest was illegal because participants blocked the road.

Texas suspends burro-killing policy in state park

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP)—The Texas wildlife agency said Tuesday it is suspending a policy that allows the killing of burros in a state park along the Mexican border after the Humane Society of the United States offered to devise a nonlethal plan to remove the destructive animals. The Texas

Parks and Wildlife Department will contribute up to \$10,000 toward a humane society aerial survey of the wild donkeys at Big Bend Ranch State Park this spring to establish baseline data, agency executive director Carter Smith said. "We believe this could be valuable information to assess the problem with burros around the park," Smith said. "We still have a long way to go to see if a viable, long-term plan can be developed."

3 online date sites agree to screen for predators

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Three online dating giants agreed to screen for sex offenders and take other safety steps after a woman was assaulted on a date, the California attorney general's office announced Tuesday. Match.com, eHarmony and Spark Networks signed a joint statement of business principles intended to provide an example for the industry and help guard against sexual predators, identity theft and financial scams. "Consumers should be able to use websites without the fear of being scammed or targeted," Attorney General Kamala D. Harris said in a statement.



Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, left, pauses to take questions from members of the media while touring the Chicago Google headquarters with Google Vice President Jim Lecinski, right, in Chicago, Tuesday, March 20, 2012.

Thunderstorms shuffle through south-central US

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Storms shuffled through parts of the south-central United States again Tuesday, bringing more heavy rain, damaging winds and thunder so loud some people in Oklahoma mistook it for an earthquake.

Forecasters said the slow-moving storm system that socked the region Monday could cause more flash floods, hail, strong winds and possibly tornadoes in a corridor stretching from Texas east to Louisiana and as far north as Missouri.

The National Weather Service issued tornado watches for parts of Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana, though the watch in the latter states expired by Tuesday evening. Two tornadoes in the San Antonio area injured at least eight people and damaged about 30 buildings Monday. A twister injured four people and damaged homes near North Platte, Neb., on Sunday.

In central Arkansas, strong winds Tuesday afternoon caused extensive damage in the town of Morrilton and contributed to at least one injury when a tree fell

on a home, authorities said.

"Anytime a tree falls on a house, someone is going to get hurt, but no one went to the hospital by ambulance," deputy emergency manager Brandon Baker said, adding that "we have lots of houses with trees right through them."

The city parks complex was destroyed along with the concession stand and exhibit buildings at the Conway County Fairgrounds, Baker said.

In Baxter County, volunteer

firefighters helped evacuate people who were trapped when a severe storm damaged their mobile homes in Midway, the sheriff's office said. All residents at the Country Life Mobile Home Park along Arkansas Highway 5 were accounted for and no injuries were reported, Sheriff John Montgomery said.

One mobile home was overturned and trees fell on three mobile homes, causing the roofs to collapse, officials said.

Tornado warnings were issued in eight Arkansas counties, but no tornadoes were immediately confirmed. A home, two

barns and trees were damaged in Stone and Van Buren counties, but no injuries were reported.

Officials in southeast Kansas closed several bridges, and workers in Missouri shut down a rural roadway after rain sparked flash flooding there. In Arkansas and Oklahoma, the Forest Service has closed campsites in low-lying areas to avoid another catastrophe like the flash flood that killed 20 people at a remote campground in 2010.

Storms rattled Tulsa, Okla., early Tuesday morning with thunder so strong that it registered on seismic equipment. Meteorologist Pete Snyder felt his home shake and several concerned residents called the National Weather Service to ask if there had been an earthquake.

"We have seen quite a bit of thunder on all of our seismic stations across the state," said Austin Holland, a research seismologist with the Oklahoma Geological Survey. "We can confidently say there were no earthquakes large enough to be widely felt."

Asia

Chinese spies target Taiwan's US-made defenses

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—When Taiwanese security personnel detained a suspected spy for China at a top secret military base last month, they may have had a sense of déjà vu.

Air force Capt. Chiang—he was identified only by his surname—was the fourth Taiwanese in only 14 months known to have been picked up on charges of spying for China, from which the island split amid civil war 63 years ago. While Taiwan's Defense Ministry did not disclose details of his alleged offense, his base in the northern part of the island hosts the air force's highly classified radar system and U.S.-made Patriot surface-to-air missiles, both vital to the island's aerial defense.

Chiang's arrest followed that of Maj. Gen. Lo Hsieh-che, who had access to crucial information on Taiwan's U.S.-designed command and control system, and civilian Lai Kun-chieh, who the Defense Ministry says tried without success to inveigle Patriot-related secrets from an unnamed military officer. A fourth alleged spy was detained on non-defense-related charges.

The cases show that China is seeking information about two systems that are integral to Taiwan's defenses and built with sensitive U.S. technology. A major breach could make Taiwan more vulnerable to Chinese attack.

Though relations between



Press request for comment on the recent espionage incidents. "However, Taiwan has taken aggressive steps in the last year to protect itself from intelligence threats." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

China and Taiwan have been spying on each other for decades, and U.S. intelligence agencies have also been active on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, including sharing sensitive mainland-related data with Taiwan. But the recent arrests represent a big upsurge in both the seriousness and quantity of Taiwan spy cases compared with previous years.

At the heart of the China's Taiwan espionage efforts are two systems with substantial U.S. technology—the Lockheed Martin and Raytheon-built Patriot missile defense system and the Lockheed-designed Po Sheng command and control system.

The Patriot uses sophisticated radar to track incoming aerial threats, then launches high-performance missiles to bring them down. The Po Sheng network—the Chinese name means Broad Victory—allows Taiwan's army, air force and navy to exchange battlefield information in real time. That is a big advantage in coordinating responses to the attack China has promised if Taiwan ever moves to make its de facto independence permanent.

In this Oct. 22, 2004 photo, Taiwanese soldiers stand at attention in front of a Patriot missile air defense system near the northern coastal town of Wanli, Taiwan.

the two have warmed in recent years, Beijing has never recanted a vow to retake the island, by force if necessary.

Information about the U.S.-supplied defense systems could also help the People's Liberation Army understand other U.S. defenses. Taiwanese officials,

however, say their systems are secure, and U.S. experts say American secrets will remain protected in any case.

The possibility that Taiwan might give up military secrets is certainly a worry for the U.S., its most important foreign partner.

Despite shifting recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, Washington continues to sell the island sophisticated military equipment, and sees it as an element in a string of Asian defense relationships that stretches from South Korea to Australia. Any confirmed leak of U.S. defense

secrets from Taiwan to China could undermine U.S. willingness to continue providing military equipment and technology to the island.

"We are concerned whenever this type of incident occurs," a U.S. defense official said in an email response to an Associated

and violates Japanese airspace. Japan mobilized its interceptor units and issued a similar warning to North Korea before a rocket launch in 2009, but did not follow through.

Interceptor missiles on the

Japanese destroyers would serve as the first line of defense, and the land-based Patriot missiles would be a backup. Japan has successfully tested its interceptor missiles, but has never used them in a real-world situation.

Japan may deploy missiles ahead of NKorea launch

TOKYO (AP)—Japan may deploy land- and sea-based interceptors to areas near the rocket's planned trajectory.

North Korea has said it plans to launch a satellite into orbit. Japan, the United States and other countries claim it is also seeking to test the capabilities of its long-range missiles, in violation of international agreements.

The "Unha-3" rocket is expected to fly over western Japan—including parts of Okinawa—after it is launched from a pad on North Korea's west

coast between April 14-16. That has raised concerns that a failed launch, or a falling stage of the rocket, could endanger Japanese lives or property.

Tanaka said the details of the deployments are now being worked out and refused to comment further.

But defense officials and media reports suggest Japan is likely to send three AEGIS-equipped destroyers to the Pacific and East China Sea and deploy mobile missile launch-

ers to islands in Okinawa that are near the rocket's trajectory.

"We are considering mobilizing PAC-3 missiles to Okinawa Island, or to Ishigaki or Sakishima islands, to defend our country against any contingencies," Vice Defense Minister Shu Watanabe said Tuesday. The PAC-3 is an advanced Patriot missile.

Earlier this week, Tanaka said Tokyo has not ruled out the possibility of shooting down the rocket if it is deemed a threat

this status back so they could add flights to the U.S. and Europe—lucrative routes plied by thousands of overseas Filipino workers each day.

CAAP deputy chief John Andrews said the Philippine aviation agency was developing in-house training modules and manuals to standardize training for inspectors. The CAAP board will abolish the practice of free rides for inspectors, he said.

He said the FAA welcomed the Philippines' move toward computer-based surveillance and its efforts to meet FAA guidelines on critical elements of air safety oversight. These include fielding qualified inspectors and strengthening regulations, licensing and certification.

FAA finds PH aviation standards lacking

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has found lingering deficiencies in Philippine air safety standards despite the country's efforts to fix the problems.

Unqualified personnel inspect aircraft and airport facilities, inspectors accept free rides on the same airlines they are checking and airlines receive certification despite failing to meet requirements, according to a report summary made available to The Associated Press.

Safety and management concerns led the U.S. aviation watchdog to downgrade the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines in 2007 and limit

A team from the Philippine aviation authority is set to visit Washington in mid-April to present an action plan to address the more than 20 issues mentioned in the FAA report following the technical review in January.

That visit as well as the January review are a prelude to the still unscheduled audit by the FAA.

Roxas told reporters that it may take some time before Philippines air carriers could once again be allowed to fly to the U.S. without restrictions on operations or heightened FAA surveillance.

Airline industry leaders have urged the government to work more aggressively on getting

ASIAN BRIEFS

US F-16 fighter jet crashes in SKorea; pilot safe

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The U.S. Air Force says a F-16 fighter jet crashed in central South Korea but its pilot ejected safely. The 51st Fighter Wing said in a statement that the crash took place around noon Wednesday. Officials were investigating the cause. The Air Force would not say whether the crashed plane had been flying as part of training under way in the area.

Myanmar will allow Asian observers at April vote

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar has agreed to allow observers from Southeast Asian countries to monitor April elections that are viewed as crucial for gauging the nation's much-heralded democratic reforms, a regional bloc said Tuesday. Allowing outside monitors is a major step for the long-isolated

country, which rejected international bids to observe its last two elections, in 2010 and 1990. Myanmar's decision was announced by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

15 dead as train collides with taxi in north India

LUCKNOW, India (AP)—Police in India say 15 people were killed when a train collided with an overcrowded taxi minivan at an unmanned railroad crossing in northern Uttar Pradesh state. Police spokesman Surendra Srivastava says the taxi driver is suspected of ignoring a signal that the train was approaching and crossing the rail tracks. The minivan had capacity for 10 people but was carrying 19 when the train slammed into its rear Tuesday morning and threw it off the track near Hathras, about 200 miles (350 kilometers) southwest of the state capital, Lucknow.

World

Attacks kill 46 across Iraq ahead of Arab summit

BAGHDAD (AP)—Insurgents plotting to derail next week's Arab League meeting in Baghdad unleashed bloody attacks across Iraq on Tuesday, killing 46 people. The government vowed not to be scared off from hosting the summit—the first in the country in a generation and a chance to prove it is moving toward normalcy after years of war.

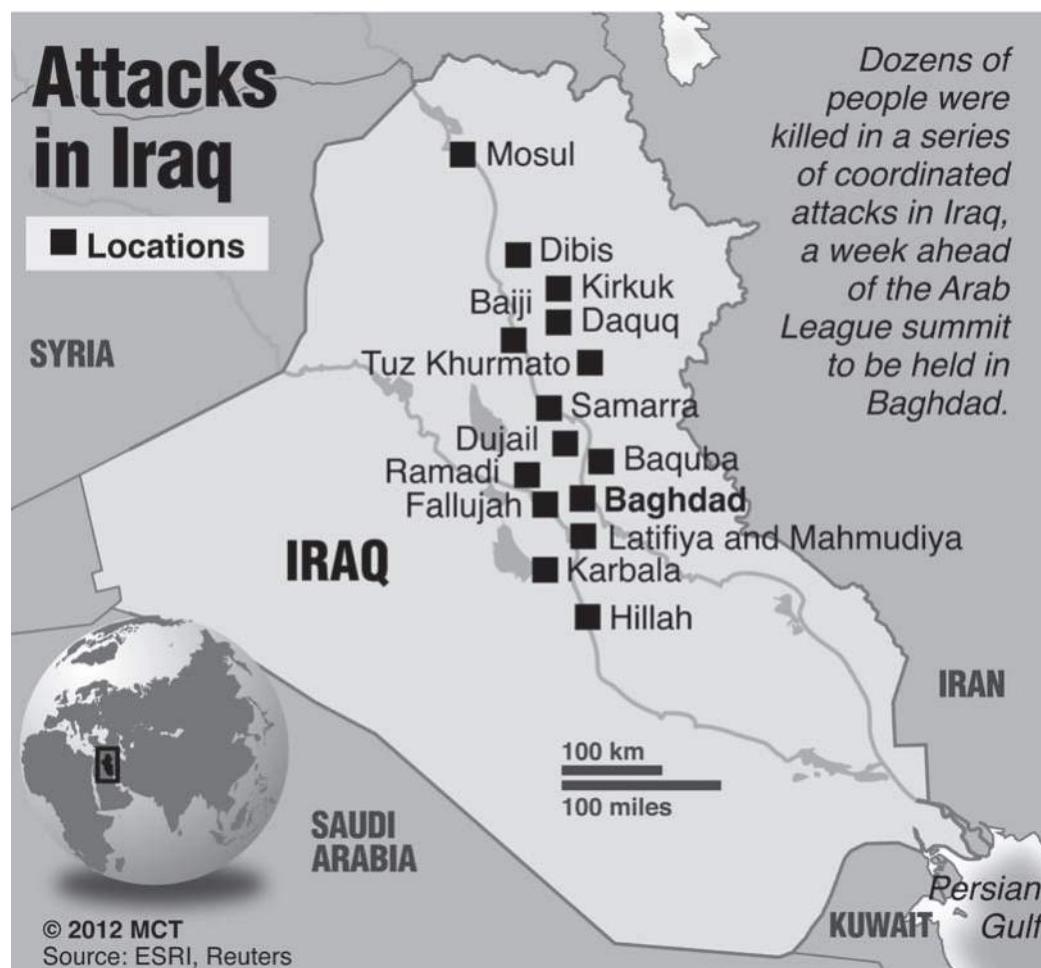
Bombs struck Shiite pilgrims in the holy city of Karbala, set cars on fire in Kirkuk and targeted security forces and government officials in Baghdad and surrounding cities. Iraqis out shopping or eating at restaurants on the bright, spring day fell victim to the onslaught: More than 200 people were wounded in fewer than six hours.

"Dozens of cars were on fire," said a panicked Saman Majid, who had just arrived at his job at a police station in Kirkuk, 180 miles (290 kilometers) north of Baghdad, when a car in the parking lot exploded.

Thirteen people, most of them police officers, were killed and 59 injured in that attack alone, said Brig. Gen. Sarhad Qadir.

"It was a scene from hell, where there is only a huge fire and dead people and nothing else," Majid said.

The attacks were not entirely unexpected: Government and security officials have warned



Dozens of people were killed in a series of coordinated attacks in Iraq, a week ahead of the Arab League summit to be held in Baghdad.

ing outside the Foreign Ministry. "Death is approaching you, when you least expect it," the Islamic state of Iraq, a local front group for al-Qaida, taunted in a statement posted Tuesday afternoon on a militant website.

The Shiite-led government staunchly stood by its \$400 million plans to host the summit, which leaders have called a crucial step for Iraq to showcase its improved stability following the sectarian fighting a few years ago that almost pulled the country into civil war.

"Such cowardly acts will not deter the national government and the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the success of the Arab summit in Baghdad to receive the guests and leaders who are invited," Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said in a statement. The attack outside his headquarters killed three passers-by, he said.

"We condemn this terrorist act and those politically frustrated terrorists who did it," Zebari said.

In all, eight cities were hit Tuesday in what appeared to be coordinated attacks, mostly against Shiite pilgrims and police and government officials. They served as a gloomy reminder of the violence that has wreaked chaos across Iraq since the U.S. invasion exactly nine years ago.

Despite numerous roadblocks, checkpoints and other security measures ringing Baghdad, Tuesday's violence showed how easily the militants penetrated the sensitive heart of the capital. A bomb exploded near the Foreign Ministry and offices for security directors overseeing the summit. Another blew up outside the Green Zone shortly after dawn, its blast shaking windows in buildings across the Tigris River.

The Iraqi wing of al-Qaida said it was behind the bombing.

for weeks that al-Qaida and Sunni sympathizers would try to thwart the League summit by sowing fear about Baghdad's stability. Plans for the capital to host the meeting last year were postponed, in part because of concerns about security.

One of the strongest to shake Mexico since the deadly 1985 tremor that killed thousands in Mexico City, Tuesday's earthquake hit hardest in border area of southern Oaxaca and Guerrero states, where Guerrero official confirmed that some 800 homes had been damaged, with another 60 having collapsed.

Hours after the shaking at noon local time (18:06 GMT), there were still no reports of death or serious injury, even after a less powerful, magnitude-5.1 aftershock was felt in the capital and several other aftershocks near the epicenter in a mountainous rural region.

"It was very strong, very substantial," said Campos Benitez, hospital director in Ometepec, about 15 miles (25 kilometers) from the epicenter.

Guerrero Gov. Angel Aguirre, who is from Ometepec, was headed there to survey the damage and ordered emergency crews and civil protection to the area to help with the damage.

Mansour, reached by telephone in Deir el-Zour, said the rebels quit fighting and took shelter in homes and apartments, fearing that protracted clashes would destroy the city.

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia said Tuesday it's ready to support a United Nations resolution endorsing Kofi Annan's plan for settling the Syrian crisis, signaling it is prepared to raise the pressure on its old ally.

Activist Osama Mansour said government troops and armored cars entered the city about 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the Iraqi border from four sides, sparking short gunbattles with fighters from the Free Syrian Army.



The state did not say how many were displaced.

In Mexico City, frightened

workers and residents poured into the streets of the capital. Telephone service was down in the city and throughout the area where the quake was felt and some neighborhoods were without power, according to Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard, who set up a hotline for people to report damage.

A pedestrian bridge collapsed on an empty transit bus.

About 40 passengers were stranded for a short time on the Mexico City airport air train, but later released. The airport closed for a time but officials said there was no runway damage and they resumed operations.

Samantha Rodriguez, a 37-year old environmental consultant, was evacuated from the 11th floor on the Angel Tower office building.

"I thought it was going to pass rapidly but the walls began to thunder and we decided to get out," she said.

Mexico City, built on a lakebed, was badly damaged in 1985 when an 8.0 earthquake killed at least 10,000 people. In past years, Guerrero has suffered several severe earthquakes, including a 7.9 in 1957 which killed an estimated 68 people, and a 7.4 in 1995 which left three dead.

The rebels also lacked guns and ammunition, he said.

Rami Abdul-Rahman of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which relies on an activist network in Syria, said the rebels faced little resistance when they took the city a few days ago. But over the past three days, regime forces attacked some of their hideouts in the Omal neighborhood, killing more than 25 fighters. Mansour said 15 rebels were killed in recent days.

On Tuesday, government forces rolled into the rest of the neighborhoods.

French hunt school killer, suspect neo-Nazi ties

TOULOUSE, France (AP)—Police searched southern France on Tuesday for an expert gunman suspected of fatally shooting seven people in the head at close range in attacks that may have been motivated by neo-Nazi ties or grudges against minorities.

The shooter is suspected of carrying out three deadly attacks: leaving four people dead on Monday at a Jewish school in Toulouse, three of them young children; killing two French paratroopers and seriously wounding another last Thursday in nearby Montauban; and fatally shooting another paratrooper in Toulouse on March 11.

All the victims in the school attack were Jewish with dual French-Israeli citizenship, and the paratroopers were of North African or French Caribbean origin. The shots were fired at such close range that the gunfire burned the skin, prosecutor Francois Molins said Tuesday.

"We are confronted with an individual extremely determined in his actions, an armed individual who acts always with the same modus operandi," he said, "in cold blood ... with premeditated actions."

He added the crimes appear to be premeditated due to the killer's "choices of victims and the choices of his targets"—the army, the foreign origin of the victims or their religion.

The killer could "act again," he said.

Interior Minister Claude Gueant described the suspect as "someone very cold, very determined, very much a master of his movements, and by consequence, very cruel."

However, his suggestion that the attacker was wearing a camera around his neck that could be used to film and post video online was described by the prosecutor as "a hypothesis."

Norway's Anders Behring Breivik, the right-wing extremist who killed 77 people in a rampage last year, had suggested in an online manifesto before the killings that a camera could be used to film such "operations." There was no mention in his indictment that he used one.

On Tuesday night, the school attack victims were being flown to Israel for burial there, accompanied by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe.

Syrian forces take eastern city from rebels

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian soldiers backed by tanks seized the eastern city of Deir el-Zour from rebels on Tuesday, the latest opposition stronghold to fall to an offensive by the better equipped Syrian military.

Activist Osama Mansour said government troops and armored cars entered the city about 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the Iraqi border from four sides, sparking short gunbattles with fighters from the Free Syrian Army.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned that the resolution shouldn't turn into an ultimatum to the Syrian government, setting the stage for tough bargaining over the wording of the document at the U.N. Security Council.

But Lavrov appeared to indicate Russia's growing impatience with Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose government he said made "many mistakes" that led to a wors-

ening of the conflict.



Taking back rebel-held cities in the past weeks, government troops have often heavily shelled neighborhoods before sending in troops, killing civilians and damaging buildings.

"They knew they could not hold control of the neighborhoods, so they decided to stop fighting, knowing that the regime would bring in heavy weapons and kill many civilians," Mansour said.

Focus

DHULIYAN, India (AP)—Sagira Ansari sits on a dusty sack outside her uneven brick home in this poor town in eastern India, her legs folded beneath her. She cracks her knuckles, then rubs charcoal ash between her palms.

With the unthinking swiftness of a movement performed countless times before, she slashes a naked razor blade into a square-cut leaf to trim off the veins. She drops in flakes of tobacco, packs them with her thumbs, rolls the leaf tightly between her fingers and ties it off with two twists of a red thread.

For eight hours a day, Sagira makes bidis—thin brown cigarettes that are as central to Indian life as chai and flat bread.

She is 11 years old.

Sagira is among hundreds of thousands of children toiling in the hidden corners of rural India. Many work in hazardous industries crucial to the economy: the fiery brick kilns that underpin the building industry, the pesticide-laden fields that produce its food.

Most of the children in Sagira's town of Dhuliyan in West Bengal state work in the tobacco dust to feed India's near limitless demand for bidis.

Under Indian law, this is legal.

Sagira, who has deep brown eyes and a wide smile, joined her family's bidi work when she was 7. At first she just rolled out thread for her older sisters and brother, then she helped finish off the cigarettes, pushing down the open ends. Last year, she graduated to full-scale rolling.

She is not alone. Her best friend, Amira, also rolls bidis. So do Wasima and Jaminor and the rest of the girls in a neighborhood that is, at its heart, a giant, open-air bidi factory.

Parents and children roll cigarettes on rooftops, in the alleyways, by the roads. One woman draped in a red shawl in the yard behind Sagira's house breast feeds her baby while rolling. Of the roughly 20,000 families in Dhuliyan, an estimated 95 percent roll bidis to survive.

Sagira is expert enough that even when distracted, her fingers continue to flit blindly through the tobacco shavings in front of her.

She says the work can make her ill, with a cold, a cough, a fever. Her head often aches. So do her fingers.

Sometimes, she takes her woven basket of tendu leaves and tobacco to the banks of the Ganges to roll in a circle with her friends. She stops every so often to splash in the river for a few moments. Then she gets back to work.

"I can't play around," she laments.

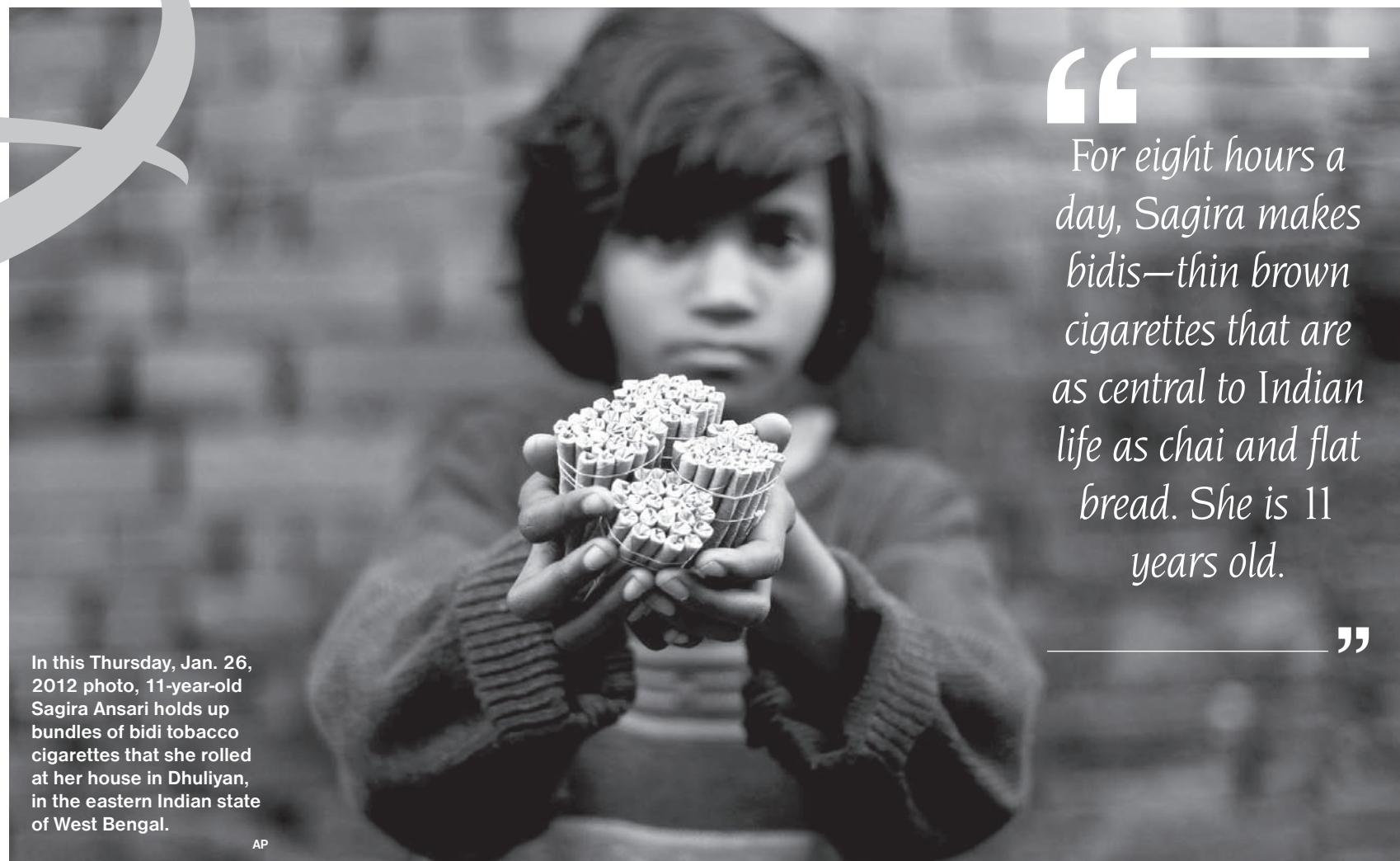
Manu Seikh, the bidi king of Sagira's neighborhood, sits on a roadside bench. In front of him lie orderly stacks of rupee bills—tens, fifties, hundreds—large bags filled with one- and two-rupee coins and a small box holding his asthma inhaler.

He and thousands of middlemen like him are the linchpins that provide the veneer of legality to the bidi industry, insulating the powerful companies selling bidis from the families and children rolling them.

Seikh, 66, got his start in a bidi factory when he was 16, back when bidis were rolled on the factory floor.

A 1986 law barred children under 14 from working with bidis and other hazardous industries, but left a huge loophole that allowed children to assist their families with work performed at home.

So now, while the tobacco is threshed,



In this Thursday, Jan. 26, 2012 photo, 11-year-old Sagira Ansari holds up bundles of bidi tobacco cigarettes that she rolled at her house in Dhuliyan, in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal.

AP

Indian girl trapped in life of cigarette rolling

cut and blended in factories, it is then given to Seikh and other middlemen to distribute to families for rolling. The bidis are then brought back to the factory for roasting, packaging and shipping. A pack of 10 to 12 will retail for 6 rupees, or 12 cents.

The informal nature of the work makes it nearly impossible to count how many of India's 7 million bidi rollers are children, but estimates range from 250,000 to 1 million.

Every noon, adults and children carry baskets and tubs filled with bundles of bidis to Seikh's corner stall, where his men scan them for quality, reject those deemed substandard and stack the others in shallow wooden boxes. A bookkeeper makes a note in a ledger and hands over a chit for payment.

Then the rollers receive more tobacco and tendu leaves for another day's work.

Seikh blames poverty for forcing the children to work, and the government for failing to stop it.

"I am very concerned about children not going to school and losing their futures. But we are helpless," Seikh says.

In his nearby factory, Ranjan Choudhary, 37, also distances himself from blame, even as boys aged about 7 or 8

slide bidis into plastic pouches and seal them on a small stove.

Whatever the child labor laws say, he sees the industry as "a lifeline" for the people.

"It affects children, but for them to survive, this is the only industry here. There is no other source of income," he said.

The industry's chief trade group also brushed off responsibility.

"The child has every right to help the mother. As long as we don't recruit the children to roll bidis, I don't think we violate any act," said Umesh Parekh, chief executive of the All India Bidi Industry Federation. Bidi rollers should "themselves exercise restraint" in using children, he said, adding that his trade group had no plans to fight against child labor.

"The industry is not doing anything for that. It is for the government to do," he said.

The government is reevaluating its child labor policy, said Mrutyunjay Sarrangi, India's labor secretary, but had yet to decide on any concrete action.

"We are having discussions," he said.

India has tacitly recognized this Dickensian nightmare with a recent

law making education compulsory up to age 14, said Bhavna Mukhopadhyay of the Voluntary Health Association of India, an aid group.

"Everything has a time, and I think this is the right time to do it ... you have to ban child labor across the board, strictly," she said.

But efforts to change the labor laws are complicated by the bidi industry's clout in government. One company owner even sits in the national Cabinet.

Sagira's town was once a textile center where her family for generations wove scarves and sarongs on hand looms.

Mired in poverty, they lived in a mud and thatch hut and could afford only a single meal a day for their 12 children. "We were starving," said Sagira's father, Mahmood Ansari.

Then the Ganges caused flooding that destroyed the family's house—and its loom.

Meanwhile, merchants from other states realized the cheap labor here would be ideal for bidi work.

Sagira's grandfather turned to bidi rolling, then her father when he turned 12.

Now, every day at 8 a.m., Sagira, her 17-year-old brother and sisters aged 18 and 14 begin a four-hour rolling

For eight hours a day, Sagira makes bidis—thin brown cigarettes that are as central to Indian life as chai and flat bread. She is 11 years old.

session. They stop to bathe and have lunch, spend a few hours cutting the tendu leaves into neat squares and then roll for a few more hours.

Because of bidis, his seven children are far better off than he was, Ansari said.

The family gets 75 rupees (\$1.50) for every 1,000 bidis rolled, totaling about \$150 a month. That's enough for three meals a day, with a little fish or egg once a week. A few months ago, Ansari used loans to replace the home of tarps and sticks his family had lived in for two decades with an unfinished two-room house of brick and plaster with dirt floors.

But there is not much hope for Sagira's future.

She's been to school only twice in the past month; she's too busy, her mother, Alea Bibi, said. She goes only when there's a reason, when new books are being handed out or to register for the aid the government gives to bidi rollers as an incentive to educate their children.

When she does show up, she is humiliated for her absences, made to hold her ears with her elbows outstretched and repeatedly sit down and stand up. It doesn't work, yet each year she graduates to the next grade, regardless of her attendance.

She barely knows math, but can at least count to 25, the number of bidis in a finished bundle.

But at night, after the work is done, her brother, who rarely attends school himself, uses her schoolbooks to teach her to read.

She dreams of being a schoolteacher.

Far more likely, she will get faster at rolling bidis, which will improve her marriage prospects. Then, as so often happens here, her husband might stop working, and she—and eventually her own children—will become the bidi-rolling breadwinners.

Her father sees no way to break the cycle.

"We are destined to roll bidis," he said.

Environment

Increasing pressure to harvest small fish worries scientists

By CRAIG WELCH
THE SEATTLE TIMES

SEATTLE—As ocean scientists probe what ails some of the largest creatures in the sea, a wave of new research is urging them to look at the little things—specifically the tiny schooling fish that make up the cornerstone of ocean food webs.

Species like herring, smelt, sardines and squid are the food of choice for many of the ocean's top predators. But there is increasing pressure globally to harvest marine "forage fish" for everything from hog feed and fertilizer to fishmeal in tuna pens or as bait for recreational or commercial fishing.

And these creatures are often the fish scientists understand the least.

"The idea that forage fish are important isn't new," said Phil Levin, a biologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle. "But if you take the fish out of the system ... what are the costs if those fish are no longer there to be eaten by birds or mammals or other fish? That's what we're talking about now."

Take, for example, the discovery late last year by an international team of scientists who tracked what happens to birds when the small fish they eat vanish.

Those researchers stumbled upon a remarkable pattern: Every time populations of ocean forage fish—small schooling creatures like squid or anchovies—dipped below a third of their peak, seabird births also

plummeted, according to the study published in late December in the journal *Science*. It happened with terns and gulls and auklets and puffins. It happened in the Atlantic, the Arctic, in Europe and off the U.S. West Coast.

Then, late last month, another pair of scientists determined that sardine populations from California to Washington appeared likely to collapse in coming years, just as they had during the "Cannery Row" days of the middle 20th century.

Other experts disputed the finding, but the debate highlighted an emerging conflict in marine science.

These tiny fish, while resilient, may be especially vulnerable to overfishing, climate change, habitat loss and shifting

ocean chemistry. And their loss could have profound impacts throughout marine ecosystems—far more so, even, than the loss of some well-known predators.

"In the big picture, there are growing concerns globally that some forage fish stocks are unhealthy and the way we harvest them is unsustainable," said Bill Sydeman, a marine biologist with California's Farallon Institute and member of the team that worked on the bird study.

There's no clear pattern off the coast of Washington and Oregon. Fisheries for anchovies and herring are relatively small, and researchers say that while sardine populations have been in decline, there has also been a recent rebound and fishing pressure remains a fraction of what it was a half-century ago.

But some other species—such as the tiny endangered oceangoing smelt called eulachon found in the Columbia River and its tributaries—are facing dramatic reductions from habitat loss, climate changes and other factors. And the big battle shaping up is what to do next—whether to study and protect the important tiny schooling creatures we don't really fish yet at all.

Some see potential future protein in the voluminous, glowing lanternfish that occupy deep waters in the Pacific, or the slender eel-like sand lances that feed larger fish. But others see the future stability of an ocean food chain already in flux.

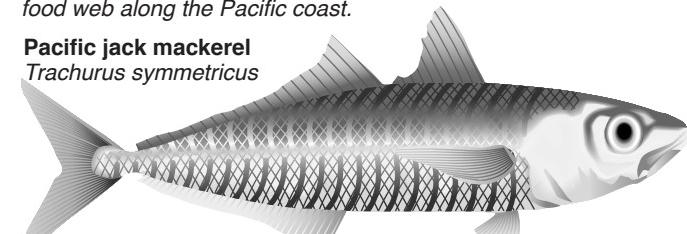
"We know that predator species, marine mammals and seabirds are very dependent on forage species," said Paul Shively, with the Pew Environment program that is working to prevent expansion of commercial forage-fish harvests. "We know that the demand for forage species is growing. But most of our laws exist to promote fish-

Forage fish

Several species of forage fish, so-called because other marine creatures rely on them for food, are important to the marine food web along the Pacific coast.

Pacific jack mackerel

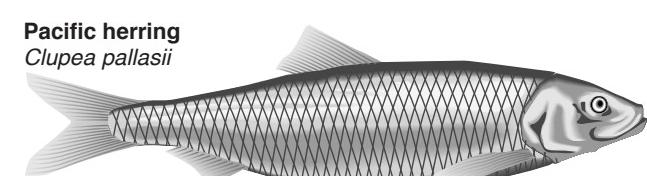
Trachurus symmetricus



Length 13.8 to 19.7 in. (35 to 50 cm) avg. adult
Life span Up to 30 years

Pacific herring

Clupea pallasii



Length 12.9 in. (33 cm) avg. adult
Life span Up to 19 years

Pacific sardine

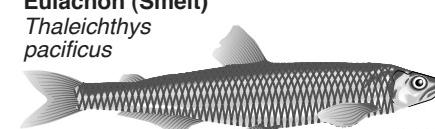
Sardinops sagax



Length 9 in. (23 cm) avg. adult
Life span Up to 14 years

Eulachon (Smelt)

Thaleichthys pacificus



Length 8.6 in. (22 cm) avg. adult
Life span Up to five years

Northern anchovy

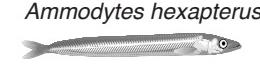
Engraulis mordax



Length 7 in. (18 cm) avg. adult
Life span Up to seven years

Sand lance

Ammodytes hexapterus



Length 4.25 in. (11 cm) avg. adult
Life span Up to five years

Source: NOAA, OceanLink, BBC
Graphic: Mark Nowlin, The Seattle Times

© 2012 MCT

ty schooling creatures, often dubbed forage fish because so many other creatures eat them.

In many cases, those impacts aren't clear.

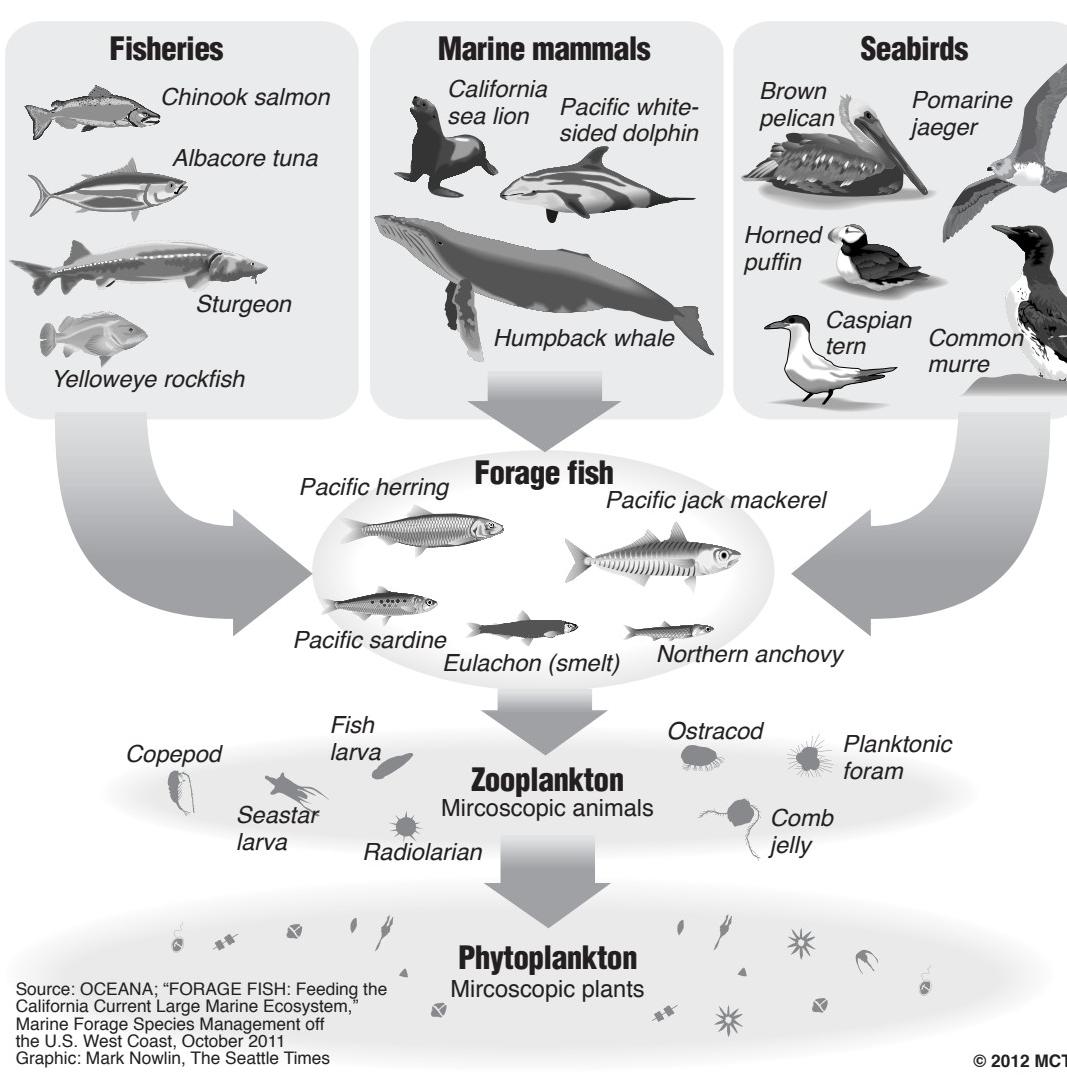
The odd mechanics of the Pacific Coast help make California and the Pacific Northwest one of the world's most productive ocean environments.

The entire system is driven by the bottom of the food chain. When the wind blows, it causes water to rise from the deep, bringing with it fresh nutrients that fuel microscopic plant and animal life. Between those tiny phytoplankton and zooplankton communities and the salmon and whales for which our region is famous are a relatively small group of fat-

ty schooling creatures, often dubbed forage fish because so many other creatures eat them.

Researchers call this food chain "wasp-waisted," because this middle section is relatively narrow. Far fewer species, perhaps a few dozen in all, make up the bulk of marine forage fish, and that makes them extraordinarily important.

"The majority of the biomass is really tied up in just a handful of species," said Levin, with the fisheries service. "With some predators there are two or three that play the same role, so that if one goes down, something else can functionally do the same job. That's not so much true with forage fish. There's not as much redundancy."



DO YOUR PART

Disinfect without polluting your home

By TERRI BENNETT
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

When it comes to cleaning our homes, most of us want to make sure of one thing—that we are doing a deep clean and actually disinfecting the rooms and surfaces in our house. Here's the thing. You don't need chemical-based cleaners to kill germs. Do Your Part and find safer and just as effective disinfecting options

that will work for every spot in your home.

Vinegar is my favorite all natural disinfectant. Put equal parts vinegar and hot water in a spray bottle and get to work. This acidic solution eats away at most germs on everything from counter tops to toilet bowls. The exception is marble and other porous surfaces. Vinegar will damage those. Use it full strength on

things like cutting boards or dilute it with water for the perfect cleaner for finished surfaces such as painted walls. Mix only what you need as water and exposure to light reduces the solutions cleaning properties.

If you don't want to make your own disinfectants at home, you have more store bought options than ever. Some of my go to and ready-made options include Seventh Generation. Their cleaners and disinfectants are made using plant extracts. And, new Proxi products use

hydrogen peroxide to disinfect surfaces throughout your home. Of course bleach works great too but the fumes can be dangerous, especially for little ones at home. I do use it sparingly in my home and always heavily diluted with water. A little bit of bleach goes a long way. A teaspoon of bleach mixed with 12 oz of water makes a powerful disinfectant but again, mix as needed because it loses effectiveness with time. This is a great solution for porous surfaces where

you can't use vinegar.

The last thing any of us want to do when disinfecting at home is to leave a trail of toxic chemicals in our wake. Do Your Part to seek out safer options that will save you money and won't pollute your home.

Terri Bennett is a veteran TV meteorologist, eco-expert and author of "Do Your Part: A practical guide for everyday green living" available at DoyourPart.com. Send questions to terri@doyourpart.com

Life & Style

A colorful centennial for DC's cherry trees

By MONIKA JOSHI

USA TODAY

Boosted by an unusually warm winter, Washington's famous cherry trees are looking fit and healthy this year and are blooming well ahead of schedule.

It's almost as if they know they need to produce a special show of their pink and white blooms for 2012, which marks the 100th anniversary of the planting of the trees as a gift from Japan.

But as an expected 1 million or more visitors come through Washington for the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, which opened Tuesday, they may not be aware of a facility about five miles from the Tidal Basin that has helped ensure the genetic legacy of the original trees while also breeding new varieties the public can enjoy.

These trees reside at the U.S. National Arboretum, dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of ornamental plants. The 446-acre botanical research center houses more than 1,600 cherry trees that represent 400 genetically distinct varieties.

"When people think of flowering cherries, they think of the Tidal Basin," says Margaret Pooler, a research geneticist at the arboretum. "But there's so many more species people haven't seen yet."

Poole says the arboretum is trying to incorporate those species into new varieties—called cultivars—that people will want to plant.

Cultivar, short for "cultivated variety," describes the selection of a plant that has been propagated for

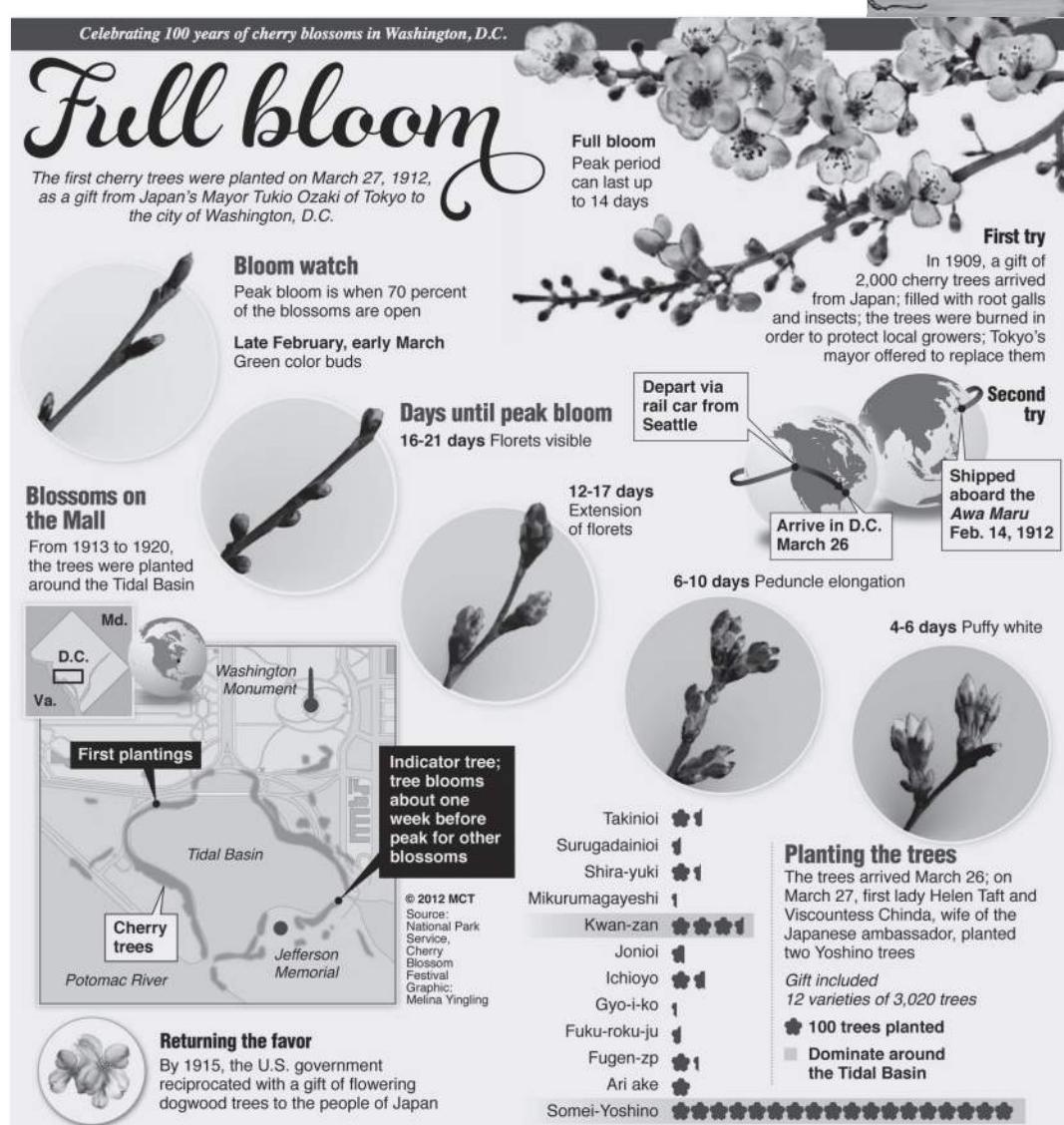
specific traits. For example, a plant that can resist cold weather might be crossed with a plant that has a dark pink color. The goal of creating cultivars is to broaden the genetic base of flowering cherries available to the public, Pooler says. Homegrowers can check for these varieties at local and mail-order nurseries.

In celebration of the centennial, the arboretum is introducing a flowering cultivar this month called "Helen Taft." It's named after the first lady who played a pivotal role in getting the trees to the Tidal Basin. The seed parent of "Helen Taft" comes from a cutting of the tree that was planted by the first lady and the Japanese ambassador's wife, Viscountess Chinda, in 1912.

"It's important to recognize Helen Taft's role because most people have no idea who she is," Pooler says. "No one even thinks that it took some serious effort on both sides of the ocean to get these plants here."

In addition to developing new varieties of flowering cherries, the arboretum has helped preserve the genetic heritage of the 1912 trees from Japan.

In the late 1970s, the deteriorating health of the original trees was noted by a former arboretum employee, Roland Jefferson, while collecting data at Potomac Park. The dying trees were being replaced by nursery stock, and



Tourists take snapshots of cherry blossoms at or near peak bloom in Washington, D.C. on March 19, 2012. The festival is scheduled to run from March 20 to April 27, but the trees are expected to reach peak bloom in the next day or two, and the blossoms may be off the trees entirely by the time most tourists are normally expected to arrive.

OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT

Jefferson was afraid the original gift would be lost.

"They're great beauty, and I was concerned about their condition," says Jefferson, 88, a retired botanist. "I thought they should be saved for future generations to enjoy."

The arboretum obtained cuttings of the surviving trees from the Tidal Basin and cultivated clones. Workers have since planted 450 of the clones at the Tidal Basin in cooperation with the National Park Service.

"The National Arboretum has been a strong supporter of our effort to sustain the grove," Robert Defeo, chief horticulturist at the National Park Service, said in an email.

In 1980, the arboretum was approached by Japanese officials who

said they had lost the parent stock of cherry trees they had given to the United States. The arboretum responded by providing them 3,000 cuttings of the original trees.

"We also added original clones to our collection at the arboretum, so we have them preserved here long term," Pooler says. "Even when the originals die, we have the exact clones here."

According to the National Park Service, about 100 trees from the original gift of more than 3,000 still survive, exceeding the average life span of 50 to 75 years in the United States.

"It's significant that these have been here for 100 years," Pooler says. "They're a constant reminder of a friendship gift combined with a beautiful bloom."

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21 Jump Street

Friday	4:25	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:25
Monday thru Thursday	4:25	7:25	

Jonah Hill, Channing Tatum
Comedy, Action • Rated R

Synopsis

The television series that shot Johnny Depp to stardom makes the leap to the big screen in this reboot starring Jonah Hill and Channing Tatum. Schmidt (Hill) and Jenko (Tatum) have the kind of faces that could let them pass for teenagers. Eager to prove themselves as effective policemen, the pair join the Jump Street program and go undercover to investigate a high-school drug ring. Now, the only thing more daunting than the prospect of taking on violent adolescent dope slingers is the possibility of experiencing the torture of their teenage years all over again. Ice Cube, Brie Larson, and Rob Riggle co-star.



The Vow

Friday	4:15	7:15	9:55
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05
Monday thru Thursday	4:05	7:05	

Rachel McAdams, Channing Tatum
Drama • Rated PG 13



John Carter

Friday	4:05	7:05	9:45
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05
Monday thru Thursday	4:05	7:05	

Taylor Kitsch, Lynn Collins
Fantasy, Science fiction • Rated PG 13



Silent House

Friday	4:30	7:30	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30
Sunday	1:30	4:30	7:30
Monday thru Thursday	4:30	7:30	

Lizbeth Olsen, Adam Trese
Thriller • Rated R



Dr. Seuss' The Lorax

Friday	4:10	7:10	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10
Monday thru Thursday	4:10	7:10	

Zac Efron, Taylor Swift
Children's/Family • Rated PG



Project X

Friday	9:35
Saturday	9:35
Sunday	7:20
Monday thru Thursday	7:20

Thomas Mann, Jonathan Brown
Comedy • Rated R



Act of Valor

Friday	4:00	7:00	10:00
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00
Monday thru Thursday	4:00	7:00	

Emilio Rivera, Roselyn Sanchez
Adventure, Action • Rated R



Journey 2: Mysterious Island

Friday	4:20	7:20
Saturday	1:20	4:20
Sunday	1:20	4:20
Monday thru Thursday	4:20	

The Rock, Vanessa Hudgens, Michael Caine
Adventure • Rated PG

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Dutch museum: Still life IS by Vincent van Gogh

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)—It was, it wasn't, it is: A still life once thought to be by Vincent van Gogh but later downgraded to being the work of an anonymous artist is indeed by the tormented Dutch impressionist himself, researchers announced Tuesday.

The process leading to the confirmation of the painting's authenticity reads like a cold case detective story. A new X-ray technique helped experts re-examine what they already knew about "Still life with meadow flowers and roses" and draw on a growing pool of scholarly Van Gogh research.

A detailed X-ray of an underlying painting of two wrestlers and knowledge of the painter's period at a Belgian art academy led a team of researchers to conclude that the painting really is by Van Gogh.

The painting is owned by the Kroeller-Mueller Museum in the central Netherlands and was being hung there Tuesday among its other Van Gogh works.

There was no real eureka moment for experts studying the still life, said Louis van Tilborgh, a senior researcher at Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum who took part in the confirmation process.

"All the pieces just fell into place," he told The As-



This photo provided by the Kroeller Mueller Museum in Otterlo, Netherlands, Tuesday, March 20, 2012, shows a painting entitled "Still life with meadow flowers and roses" by Vincent van Gogh.

sociated Press.

The painting, on a 100 cm-by-80 cm (40x31 inch) canvas, was bought by the Kroeller-Mueller Museum in 1974 as a Van Gogh.

Experts thought the canvas was too large for that period, the depiction of a vase brimming over with flowers and yet more flowers ly-

Theo in Paris from late 1886.

"But when they hung it (in the museum), doubts crept in" about its authenticity, said Van Tilborgh.

Experts thought the canvas was too large for that period, the depiction of a vase brimming over with flowers and yet more flowers ly-

ey. She's afraid, her mother passing away eventually, and there's nothing."

Kossoff denied the accusation, noting that the establishment of a conservatorship would require a judge to review Gabor's finances and make sure all money is "being spent in her best interests."

"It would be a strange way to get ahold of Ms. Gabor's money," Kossoff said.

Von Anhalt said he welcomed the court scrutiny of Gabor's care. "I want the court to come and see what's going on," he said. "I want the

court to see how comfortable my wife is."

A news release issued before the filing stated that Hilton has

been waiting for a year for financial and medical information about her mother that husband von Anhalt has refused to disclose.

"While her husband has been having her see a cardiologist and has caregivers at her house, I am very concerned that her medical needs and treatment are not being managed in her best interest," Hilton wrote in her court filing.

The first hearing on the matter was scheduled for May 2 before Superior Court Judge Reva Goetz, who also oversees the conservatorship of Britney Spears.

Los Angeles (AP)—Fans are so hungry for "The Hunger Games" that Hollywood's buzz-

ing about an opening weekend to rival the \$140 million debuts of some of the "Twilight" movies.

Early tracking pegged "The Hunger Games" at only about half that much. But box-office forecasters have been continually revising their predictions upward based on audience awareness and advance ticket sales.

Opening Friday, "The Hunger Games" has a strong shot at shattering the record March debut of \$116.1 million domestically for 2010's "Alice in Wonderland." It would be only the second movie opening in March to top \$100 million in the first weekend.

could exceed even our strongest expectations this weekend. But we just don't know. Everybody's speculating."

A debut of \$140 million would put "The Hunger Games" into the top-five on the all-time charts for domestic opening weekends.

At No. 1 is last year's "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2" (\$169.2 million), followed by 2008's "The Dark Knight" (\$158.4 million); 2007's "Spider-Man 3" (\$151.1 million); 2009's "The Twilight Saga: New Moon" (\$142.8 million); and last fall's "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn—Part 1" (\$138.1 million).

Hollywood.com box-office analyst Paul Dergarabedian said "The Hunger Games" could approach the \$130 million to \$140 million level achieved by two of the "Twilight" flicks.

"The Hunger Games" may have an edge, too. Female fans drive "Twilight," while "The Hunger Games" has strong interest from both sexes. "Given that this is the first installment, there's no precedent for what this movie could do. We don't have a track record for 'The Hunger Games,'" Dergarabedian said.

"This is one of those movies that because of that appeal to virtually every kind of audience, it

ing on a table in the foreground was too exuberant, too busy. The signature was in an unusual position for Van Gogh—the top right hand corner.

With the doubts piling up, the museum in 2003 decided to attribute the painting to an anonymous artist instead of to Van Gogh.

But the detective work did not end there.

An X-ray taken five years earlier had already revealed an indistinct image of the wrestlers and continued to interest researchers. Now, a new more detailed X-ray has shown the wrestlers in more detail, along with the brush strokes and pigments used. They all pointed back to Van Gogh.

Michael Bay tells 'Ninja Turtles' fans to 'chill'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Michael Bay thinks "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" fans need to chill.

The 47-year-old director-producer incited outrage among fans of the superhero franchise when he revealed at the Nickelodeon upfront presentation in New York last week that the pizza-loving, crime-fighting turtles would come from an "alien race" in a "Ninja Turtles" film he is producing.

According to franchise lore, mysterious radioactive ooze transformed the turtles into su-

perheroes who battle evildoers. "Fans need to take a breath and chill," Bay said in a statement posted on his site Monday night. "They have not read the script. Our team is working closely with one of the original creators of 'Ninja Turtles' to help expand and give a more complex back story. Relax, we are including everything that made you become fans in the first place. We are just building a richer world."



"Ninja Turtles" debuted as a comic book in 1984 before spawning a franchise that included toys, TV shows, films and video games.

Fans took to Twitter, Facebook and other social networking sites to vent about the apparent change to the wisecracking turtles' origins.

Robbie Rist, who voiced the character Michelangelo in the original 1990 live-action film adaptation, said Monday in a Facebook message that Bay is

"sodomizing" the original movies and causing "the rape of our childhood memories."

Bay, who directed the past three "Transformers" movies, said last week that "kids are going to believe one day these turtles actually do exist when we are done with this movie" and that they come "from an alien race, and they are going to be tough, edgy, funny and completely lovable."

The new take on the "Ninja Turtles" is set for release next year by Paramount Pictures under the Nickelodeon Movies label.

Malia Obama safe after earthquake in Mexico

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama's oldest daughter, Malia, was never in danger during a strong earthquake Tuesday in Mexico, the White House said.

Malia, 13, accompanied by Secret Service agents, has been in Oaxaca in southwestern Mexico for a school-sponsored service project. The U.S. Geological Survey said the earthquake was felt strongly in Oaxaca.

The quake was followed by an aftershock that shook southern Mexico, swayed buildings in Mexico City and sent frightened workers and residents into the streets.

Kristina Schake, the first lady's communications director, said Malia Obama "is safe and was never in danger." Typically the White House does not comment on the Obama children but made an exception because of the quake.

"We would reiterate our request that the media respect

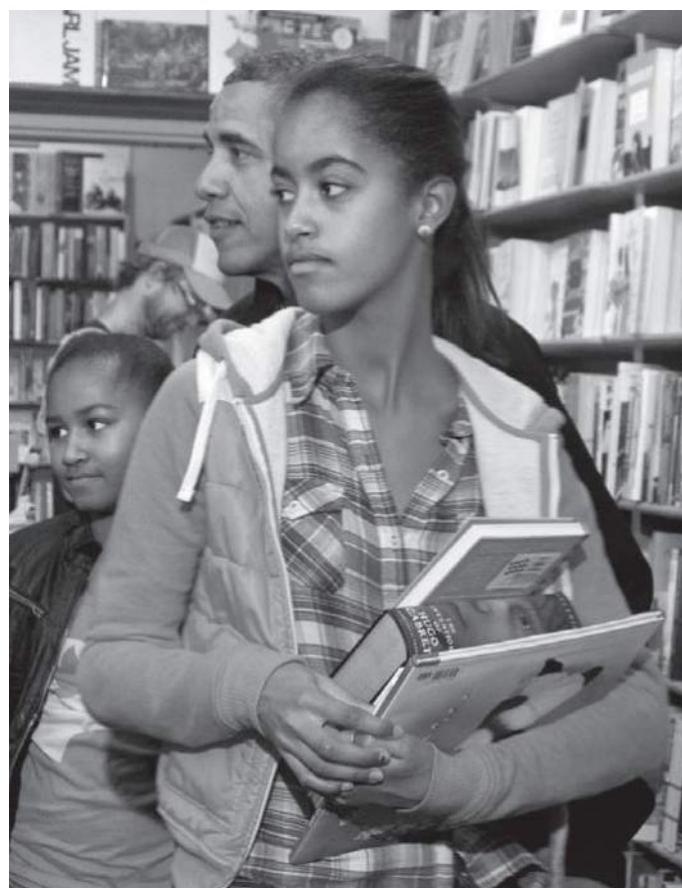
the privacy and security of the Obama children and not report on or photograph the girls when they are not with their parents," Schake said.

Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum criticized Obama for allowing his daughter to travel to Mexico when the State Department had issued a travel warning for the country. "When the government is saying this is not safe, then you don't set the example by sending your kids down there," Santorum said during an interview with radio host Glenn Beck.

The State Department warning in February did not say Americans shouldn't travel to Mexico but noted that "crime and violence are serious problems throughout the country and can occur anywhere."

In this Nov. 26, 2011 file photo, President Barack Obama shops with his daughters Malia, foreground, and Sasha, in Washington.

AP



Beatles' 'Yellow Submarine' movie restored for DVD

LONDON (AP)—The animated Beatles movie "Yellow Submarine" has been carefully restored frame-by-frame for DVD release this year.

Specialists worked for four months to individually clean each frame of the 1968 surreal tale by hand, the Beatles' holding company Apple Corps Ltd. said Tuesday.

The specialists chose not to use automated software because

of the delicate nature of the hand-drawn artwork, the company added.

The colorful movie, a fantasy that features cartoon versions of the Beatles and images from some of their psychedelic songs, is currently out of print. It features some of the band's greatest hits including "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds," "Elephant Rigby" and "When I'm Sixty-Four."

Betty White wishes happy 90th to Carl Reiner

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Betty White has a suggestion for long-time friend Carl Reiner as he marks his 90th birthday: "Milk it."

Reiner plays White's boyfriend Max on the TV Land sitcom "Hot in Cleveland" and turned 90 Tuesday. White's 90th birthday was in January.

White suggested that Reiner should have people spoil him rotten.

White and Reiner have a special connection: The actress' late husband, Allen Ludden, served with Reiner in World War II.

White's birthday wish for Reiner is continued good health so he can keep acting and writing.

Reiner created "The Dick Van Dyke Show."

A spokeswoman says he is enjoying his 90th birthday with friends and family.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

German composer Heiner Goebbels wins Ibsen prize

OSLO, Norway (AP)—German composer and music director Heiner Goebbels has won the International Ibsen Award for creating new insights in theater that have influenced producers and musicians. The awarding jury describes the 59-year-old as "one of the great creative personalities of today," who has produced "an astounding body of work in disparate disciplines." Goebbels will be presented the 2.5 million-kroner (\$450,000) prize in Oslo in September as part of the Ibsen Festival at the National Theater. The prize is awarded every two years to people, institutions or organizations for bringing "new artistic dimensions to the world of drama or theater." It is named after Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, who lived from 1828-1906.

Hugh Hefner's son pleads in domestic violence case

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Hugh Hefner's 21-year-old son has pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor domestic violence charge stemming from an incident with his girlfriend at their Pasadena home. Assistant Pasadena City Prosecutor Chris Blankenhorn tells City News Service that Marston Hefner pleaded no contest Tuesday to corporal injury to a spouse or cohabitant. Marston Hefner was arrested last month after police were called to the apartment he shared with 20-year-old Claire Sinclair, the 2011 Playmate of the Year. Sinclair had minor injuries and sought a restraining order against the younger Hefner the next day. Blankenhorn says Marston Hefner is expected to undergo a year of domestic violence counseling.

He also is ordered to stay away from Sinclair for three years.

'Real Housewife' Kim Zolciak expecting baby No. 2

NEW YORK (AP)—Bravo reality star Kim Zolciak and husband Kroy Biermann are expecting their second child. The 33-year-old "The Real Housewives of Atlanta" star and the Atlanta Falcons defensive end have a 9 month-old son, KJ. Zolciak tells Life & Style that she is now four months along with baby number two. In the magazine, Zolciak says KJ was an "oops," but this pregnancy was "totally planned." Zolciak and Biermann were married in Georgia on Nov. 11, 2011. Zolciak has two daughters, Brielle, 15, and Ariana, 9, from previous relationships.

Sorority experience enriches college life without hazing

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I would like to tell "Possibly Paddled Pledge" (Jan. 13) that joining a sorority was one of the best parts of college for me. It taught me about interpersonal communication, the importance of philanthropy and academics, and networking. I learned skills I would not have gained had I not joined.

My sorority had paddles. We decorated them with our symbols and Greek letters, and they were displayed on the wall. We never used them to hit anyone. Our national organization, as well as our university would have been furious. Hazing is illegal and should not be tolerated.

I say, give the Greek life a try, but if someone ever lifts a finger toward you, report her to your panhellenic organization and the dean of students immediately. Sororities are supposed to lift you up, not beat you down.

JENNIFER IN ST. LOUIS

DEAR JENNIFER: Readers unanimously agreed that padding should not be tolerated, and stressed that being a legacy does not guarantee acceptance or that a pledge will have a good experience in a particular sorority. My readers comment:

DEAR ABBY: My daughter is currently in a sorority, but her experience has been very mixed. She was not automatically welcomed by my sorority. She found the process to be difficult and judgmental. However, she did find a wonderful group of women in a different sorority.

As a sophomore this year, she is on the other side of recruitment (rush) and again felt hurt by how rude some of the new girls were. "PPP's" letter spotlighted the snobbish, elitist attitude that turns many eligible young women away from sororities. To say a group is the best-of-the-best and exclusive is offensive. I hope more girls will look beyond the glitz and glamour and give a second hard look to all of the groups.

JANE IN AKRON, OHIO

DEAR ABBY: My first month in college was wonderful. Then came sorority rush. What followed was hell. I got a paddle with the Greek letters, though it was only a "memento." Far worse was the social fragmentation of the women there. We immediately began to segregate into our little pledge classes, wore pins that identified our group and were typecast from the very beginning.

After wrestling with this psychological social dilemma—even becoming an active member, which would preclude me from ever joining another sorority—I finally deactivated, switched to a much larger school with less emphasis on the Greek system and happily sailed through the rest of my college life with honors.

A HAPPY INDEPENDENT

DEAR ABBY: As a member of a sorority, I have never heard of a sorority that used paddles to hit members. What bothers me is the apparent acceptance by "PPP's" family members of this practice.

As a prosecutor for nearly 30 years, I do not condone in any way the use of a paddle, either in fraternities or sororities.

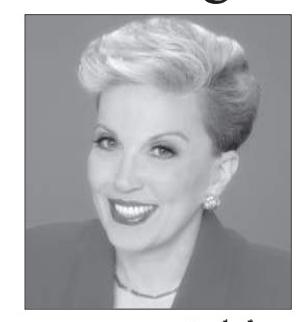
A sorority is more than academics and whispers about hazing. "PPP" should visit each chapter on the campus, attend rush and make her own decision. Only she can decide which sorority is right for her. If she pledges as a legacy, she'll be in a unique position to actively stop this practice if, in fact, it is occurring. If she's kicked out for not letting them paddle her, then she can shout it from the rooftops and maybe something will finally happen.

"PPP," stand up for what you believe. Choose a sorority you like, with women you would be proud to call your sisters, and you will have the time of your life and lifelong friends who will see you through your old age. I know. I didn't pledge my mom's chapter, but a different one.

BEEN THERE IN MONTANA

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write *Dear Abby* at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Now a Bronco, Manning says hello to his new team



Newly-signed Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning, center, shows off his new jersey with owner Pat Bowlen, left, and executive vice president of football operations John Elway during an NFL news conference at the team's headquarters in Englewood, Colo., on Tuesday, March 20, 2012.

DENVER (AP)—John Elway flashed that mile-wide grin and turned the microphone over to his new quarterback, Peyton Manning.

Talk about a powerful pair. Introducing Manning as the newest Denver Bronco on Tuesday, the two Super Bowl winners each talked about hoisting another Lombardi Trophy, this time together. And soon.

"I realize I don't have 14 years left, by any means," Manning said. "This isn't something where I'm just building a foundation to do something in two years or three years. This is a 'now' situation. We're going to do whatever we can to win right now. That's all I'm thinking about right now."

Just so long as Manning's surgically repaired neck goes along with the plan.

Neither he nor Elway has a doubt it will, and the Hall of Famer-turned-executive knew the NFL's only four-time MVP was just what his club needed.

The franchise has won just two playoff games since Elway's career came to an end with a second straight Super Bowl triumph in 1999.

Denver's last playoff victory came over Pittsburgh two months ago, when Tim Tebow delivered a stadium-rocking, 80-yard pass to Demaryius Thomas on the first play of overtime.

But things change, and in the NFL, they can change fast. Tebowmania is now a passing fad in Denver.

A couple of photos of Tebow

that once adorned the halls at the Broncos' headquarters were gone Tuesday by the time Manning was introduced.

"I believe that he's got a lot of great football left in him," Elway said of his new QB. And if that's true, the Broncos will wind up paying him \$96 million over five years under his new deal.

After holding up his new, bright orange jersey in a photo op with Elway and owner Pat Bowlen, Manning answered many of the questions that have been bouncing around since March 7, when his old team, the Colts, released him to avoid paying a \$28 million bonus and set in motion one of the most frenetic free-agent pursuits in history.

The first issue on everyone's mind: So, Peyton, how do you feel?

"I'm not where I want to be. I want to be where I was before I was injured," Manning said, referring to the neck problem that kept him off the field in 2011 after he'd started every game for the Colts for the previous 13 seasons. "I have a lot of work to do in getting to where I want to be from a health standpoint and learning this offense. This is going to take a ton of work."

As far as being the man who could bring about the end of Tebow's stay in Denver, Manning said: "I know what kind of player Tim Tebow is, what kind of person he is ... and what an awesome year he had this year. If Tim Tebow is here next year, I'm going to be the best teammate I can be to him, he and I are going to help this team win

games. If other opportunities present themselves to him, I'm going to wish him the best."

On Elway's role in leading him to choose Denver over other suitors, the most serious of which were the Titans and 49ers: "Everyone knows what kind of competitor he is as a player. I can tell he's just as competitive in this new role. That got me excited."

And so, the deal—the club's most dramatic since Elway was acquired from the Colts in 1983—was sealed.

With the new contract in place, Manning plans to retire in Denver. The Broncos, meanwhile, have some protection in the way the deal was formulated. There's no signing bonus. Manning will get \$18 million guaranteed for next season, but must pass a physical before each season, starting in 2013, to get paid.

"I don't consider it much of a risk, knowing Peyton Manning," Elway said. "I asked him, 'Is there any doubt in your mind that you can't get back to the Peyton Manning we know of?' And he said, 'There's no doubt in my mind.'"

Elway's move to the front office last year set off a whirlwind of activity that landed the Broncos in the playoffs. But the old QB is in this to win Super Bowls and he's throwing his hat in with Manning, the 50,000-yard passer who redefined the quarterback position through the 2000s, not Tebow—who seems most comfortable carrying and not throwing the ball.

"Tim Tebow's a great kid. If I want someone to marry my

daughter, it's him," Elway said. But to run an NFL offense, to get a title, he wanted Manning.

"My goal is to make Peyton Manning the best quarterback that's ever played the game," Elway said, "and he's got that ability with the football that he's got left."

"He's a guy that raises all boats. He's already made (his teammates) better, and they haven't met him yet just because of the type of person he is, his reputation and what he's done in this league. So, he's just going to have a tremendous effect on the Denver Broncos."

Manning, who turns 36 on Saturday, said he made a quick connection with Elway, who won his two Super Bowls in Denver after his 37th birthday. Since No. 7's retirement, a long string of 11 quarterbacks have come to Denver, trying in vain to replace the irreplaceable. If anyone can get out of that shadow, Manning could be the man.

He's got two trips to the Super Bowl and one title, 11 Pro Bowls and was the fastest player to reach 50,000 yards and 4,000 completions. His first TD toss for Denver will be his 400th.

Manning's familiar No. 18 was actually retired—a tribute to Denver's first quarterback, Frank Tripucka. But Tripucka was more than happy to let Manning bring it out of mothballs.

The new face of the Broncos stressed that he was ready to work and was planning to stay in town to do so.

Manning even picked up a playbook Tuesday, but the offense crafted for and by him

will be drastically changed from the option-heavy one that Tebow ran in Denver last season. And coaches can't answer any questions Manning might have until April 16, when off-season programs can begin around the league and he'll finally be able to work out at Broncos headquarters.

Still, it's expected he'll be able to run his kind of offense in Denver. Coach John Fox said he can't wait to pair that no-huddle approach with Denver's altitude for a double-whammy on defenses.

One other factor in Manning's decision to play outdoors in the Mile High City: The nearly \$40 million in salary cap room the Broncos have, putting them in the mix for quality free agents, possibly including Manning's former teammates Jeff Saturday and Dallas Clark.

The status of Manning's neck, however, will be an ongoing issue. It's one thing to throw through the entire route tree on a practice field, which

he did to pretty much everyone's satisfaction, quite another to take a blindside hit from a 300-pound defender, which hasn't happened since he was surgically repaired.

"There's no question I have work to do," Manning said. "I've been very open with the Broncos, really all the teams, about my medical history, about where I am, about how I feel. I really let them tell me. I've put all the cards out on the table, working out for three teams, going through my entire medical history, not just this past year. I couldn't sell myself when it came to that. I had to let them tell me and decide this was something they wanted to do."

Elway, general manager Brian Xanders and Fox all said the goal is for Manning to start the Broncos' first exhibition game in August. That's Manning's desire, too.

"I want to be out there every single snap," Manning said. "Every single play."

Steelers' Hines Ward retiring

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Hines Ward believes he can still play football. The longtime Pittsburgh wide receiver known for his high-wattage smile and his bone-crunching blocks just couldn't stomach the thought of doing it in some strange uniform on some strange field with a Terrible Towel in sight.

"I just wouldn't feel right," Ward said.

So rather than play for a 15th season—and his first outside the Steel City—a tearful Ward opted to retire on Tuesday and secure a legacy unmatched in the franchise's long history.

"I can say I'm a Steeler for life and that's the bottom line, that's all I've really ever wanted," Ward said.

Ward holds every significant franchise receiving record, including receptions, receiving yards and touchdowns. His 1,000 career catches rank eighth all time and he is one of two players with at least 1,000 receptions and two Super Bowl rings.

The decision comes three weeks after the 36-year-old was released by the Steelers in a salary cap maneuver. Ward says he was contacted by several clubs but never had any formal discussions. He insists there are no hard feelings for his release, understanding that football is a business. As if to prove the point, Ward embraced Steelers owner Art Rooney II after stepping away from the podium following the announcement.

"Thank you (Mr. Rooney) for giving a small town boy from Forest Park, Ga., a chance," Ward said.

The former third-round pick out of Georgia was due to make \$4 million next season, an expensive option for a player whose role diminished significantly in 2011 when he

finished with 46 receptions, the fewest since his rookie season in 1998. He embraced his role as mentor to Pro Bowlers Mike Wallace and Antonio Brown even though he knew they were chewing into his playing time.

"I know the wideouts are going to be in great hands," he said. "They're full of talent."

And they're part of an offense that didn't exist when Ward made his debut 14 years ago. He spent most of his first three seasons blocking for running back Jerome Bettis, something he did better than any receiver in the league.

Over time, the Steelers evolved from the grind-it-out attack that has been the club's identity for decades. Ward's breakout season came in 2001 when he set a franchise record with 94 receptions then obliterated that mark in 2002 when he finished with 112 catches.

He made four straight Pro Bowls from 2001-2004 and seemed to get better as he aged. He was named the Most Valuable Player of the 2006 Super Bowl after catching five passes for 123 yards and a touchdown in Pittsburgh's 21-10 victory over Seattle, the franchise's first championship in 26 years. The Steelers added a second title in 2009 to give them six, more than any other team in the league.

Ward hoped to get the Steelers their seventh Lombardi Trophy but didn't catch a pass in a 29-23 overtime loss to Denver in the wild card round of last year's playoffs. Only one pass came his way, a dart down the sideline by quarterback Ben Roethlisberger during Pittsburgh's final drive in regulation. Denver cornerback Champ Bailey swatted the ball to the ground and Ward walked off the field and into the unknown.

Heat score 17 straight points, rally past Suns, 99-95



MIAMI (AP)—Chris Bosh scored 29 points, LeBron James survived two scary falls and the Miami Heat used a 17-0 fourth-quarter run to erase a 10-point deficit and beat the Phoenix Suns 99-95 on Tuesday night for their 14th straight home victory.

James finished with 20 points, Dwyane Wade had 19, and Udonis Haslem added a season-high 15 for the Heat, who survived two huge late scares - a double-digit hole, and a frightening collision between James and Grant Hill in the final minute.

James was chasing a long pass and never saw Hill, crashing into him. James went down, failing on his first attempt to get up and stayed on the court holding his head for about a minute. He remained in the game after a timeout.

Hill led Phoenix with 19 points. Marcin Gortat had 13, Markieff Morris 12, Jared Dudley 10 and Steve Nash finished with nine points and 10 assists.

The Suns had the NBA's second-best record since Feb. 19, having won 11 of their last 14 coming in. Shannon Brown's 3-pointer with 7:29 left put Phoenix up 90-80, but the Suns missed their next 10 shots.

James, Wade and Haslem all made a pair of free throws to start Miami's late run, and the Heat tied it when Mario Chalmers stole the ball from Nash and set up Wade for a breakaway dunk.

Bosh made two more foul shots to put the Heat up for good, Wade made a layup while sprawling to the floor and stretched the lead to 95-90 after Suns coach Alvin Gentry was called for a technical, and James' jumper with 1:52 left capped the flurry. Miami made 13 of 16 free throws in the final quarter, while Phoenix was only 3 for 4.

The Suns missed four straight shots at the rim in one stretch, all in a span of 34 seconds, and the Heat started to roll.

James had another hard fall in the early going, hitting the floor hard and coming up winching. On a drive into the lane, James was hit by Morris and reached back with his right arm to brace himself for the fall. James appeared to hit his right elbow directly on the floor—he was wearing a pad on that one, though not the left—and stepped away from the foul line briefly while shaking the arm.

He remained in the game and did not get any



Phoenix Suns' Markieff Morris (11) and Shannon Brown (26) pressure Miami Heat's Chris Bosh during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Miami, Tuesday, March 20, 2012.

noticeable treatment during the next timeout.

The Heat had another injury woe to deal with as well, with starting center Joel Anthony out of the lineup for the first time this season because of a sprained ankle. Dexter Pittman made his first career start in Anthony's place.

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra spent the better part of two days raving about the Suns' play of late, especially Nash. A sampling of the terms Spoelstra used to describe the Phoenix point guard: "maestro," "timeless quarterback," "relentless" and "tireless."

All were on display throughout.

Down by nine in the early going, Phoenix closed the first half on a 13-3 run, a spurt Nash started with a 3-pointer and one that sent the Suns in the locker room up 53-49—even though Miami shot 58 percent in the first half.

Phoenix led by eight in the third quarter, holding Miami to 35 percent shooting.

Knicks 106, Raptors 87

In New York, Amare Stoudemire had 22 points and 12 rebounds while Jeremy Lin added 18 points and 10 assists as New York Knicks made it four straight easy victories since Mike Woodson replaced Mike D'Antoni as coach.

Carmelo Anthony and Tyson Chandler each scored 17 points for the Knicks, who bring a week's worth of momentum to Philadelphia on Wednesday night for a matchup with the Atlantic Division-leading 76ers.

DeMar DeRozan scored 17 points for the Raptors. Jose Calderon had 11 points and nine assists in his return from a five-game absence with a sprained right ankle, but backup Jerryd Bayless was lost to a left hip pointer in the second half.

Rockets 107, Lakers 104

At Houston, Goran Dragic hit the go-ahead 3-pointer with 28 seconds left and finished with 16 points

and 13 assists in Houston's comeback victory over Los Angeles.

Down by nine with 5 minutes left, the Rockets had a 12-0 run to take the lead.

Luis Scola and Courtney Lee scored 23 points apiece for the Rockets. Kobe Bryant had 29 points, and Pau Gasol added 21 for the Lakers.

Jazz 97, Thunder 90

In Salt Lake City, Paul Millsap scored 20 points, Al Jefferson had 16 and Devin Harris added 15 to lead Utah past Oklahoma City for its fourth straight victory.

Millsap had a dunk and a fallaway jumper to help the Jazz finish the game on a 10-4 run.

Russell Westbrook had 23 points for Oklahoma City, and Kevin Durant had 18, but went scoreless in the fourth quarter and misfired on all seven attempts from the field in the period.

The Thunder have lost four of their last seven games. The NBA's most efficient offense went 6 of 21 in the fourth quarter and committed 20 turnovers in the game.

Bucks 116, Trail Blazers 87

In Portland, Drew Gooden scored 19 points as Milwaukee beat Portland in the Trail Blazers' first home game since coach Nate McMillan was fired last week.

Carlos Delfino had 16 points, and Monta Ellis added 14 points and nine assists to help the Bucks win their sixth straight game.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 21 points and 12 rebounds for the Blazers. The only other bright spot for Portland was Brandon Roy, who made his first appearance at the Rose Garden since his abrupt retirement at the start of training camp.

Kings 119, Grizzlies 110

In Sacramento, Marcus Thornton scored 31 points and DeMarcus Cousins had 23 points and five rebounds before fouling out as Sacramento held off Memphis for its third straight victory.

Thornton added seven rebounds and six assists, and Tyreke Evans returned after missing the last two games because of a sprained left ankle, scoring nine of his 13 points in the fourth quarter.

Rudy Gay had 23 points and six rebounds, and Marc Gasol added 15 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists for the Grizzlies, who began a stretch of nine of 11 games away from home. Memphis has three of its last four.

batting .433 with three doubles, a home run and four RBIs in 30 exhibition at-bats.

Lately, Cabrera has been experimenting with wearing sunglasses in the field, a suggestion from fellow Tigers infielder Ramon Santiago.

Pence's grounder at the Phillies' field shattered Cabrera's shades.

"There's no question that his sunglasses helped him a great deal yesterday," Domrowski said. "Who knows what would have happened if he didn't have the sunglasses on? You could see the imprint of the ball on his sunglasses - the seams."

Cabrera considered himself lucky.

"It's part of the game," he said. "I can see out of my eye."

Danny Worth started at third base for the Tigers on Tuesday. They also have Brandon Inge, who's spent quite a bit of time at the spot.

Tigers manager Jim Leyland declined to talk about Cabrera's status at third base before Tuesday's game, saying he'd already said enough about the subject. Leyland knows that many people consider Cabrera a shaky fielder, at best, on a team expected to score lots of runs.

"Watch him play, write what you want, give your opinion what you think," Leyland said a day earlier. "He's doing great at third base. Is he going to make plays like Brooks Robinson? For the 100th time this spring? No. Is he going to catch the routine plays, is he going to throw it accurately with one of the better arms in the league? Yes. Is he going to hit a lot of home runs and knock in a lot of runs? Yes. He's our third baseman."

Tigers' Cabrera to miss a week, ready for opener



LAKELAND, Fla. (AP)—Detroit Tigers third baseman Miguel Cabrera has a broken bone below his right eye after being struck by a bad-hop grounder, sidelining the star slugger for at least a week with opening day on deck.

The AL Central champions start April 5 at home against Boston, giving Cabrera less than 2 1/2 weeks to recover.

"Hopefully, I'll be ready to open the season," Cabrera said Tuesday.

Cabrera had little chance Monday on a hard shot by Philadelphia's Hunter Pence that caused a bloody gash and required eight stitches. The Tigers shifted their biggest hitter across the diamond this year to make room for new first baseman Prince Fielder, acutely aware Cabrera earns his money with a bat, not a glove.

Cabrera was wearing sunglasses when he and Tigers President Dave Dombrowski addressed the injury in the right-field corner at Joker Marchant Stadium before Detroit hosted Atlanta.

Dombrowski called Cabrera's vision "perfect."

"We'll know a lot more in a week," Dombrowski said. "If he wants to go relax he can go home, and he's always welcome here."

Said Cabrera: "I am confident I can play on opening day."

Cabrera last played third base in 2008, when

Pettitte throws in bullpen, says arm feels great

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Andy Pettitte pulled his cap down low, peered into the catcher and delivered each pitch with the intensity of a postseason game.

Clearly, this was no ordinary bullpen session. Pettitte arrived at camp on Tuesday, took a physical and pulled on the familiar navy pinstripes. The lefty felt right at home with the New York Yankees.

"It's weird to say it. I feel like I never left," Pettitte said. "I don't know how to explain it."

Pettitte ended his brief retirement last Friday, signing a minor league contract that would pay him \$2.5 million if he's added to the major league roster. He is three months shy of his 40th birthday, but he feels fine physically and hopes to help the Yankees win their 28th World Series championship.

Pettitte threw 50 pitches to catcher Russell Martin and was so encouraged that he joked he might be ready in three weeks, even though the target date for his return to the Bronx is May 1. Pitching coach Larry Rothschild and others want Pettitte to ease his way back after not pitching for 17 months.

he started 14 games for Detroit. He was the Marlins' full-time third baseman in 2006 and then again in 2007, when made 23 errors and had a .941 fielding percentage.

"I really feel like I'm progressing. I really felt good about it," Pettitte said. "I told Larry: 'You're going to have to make me take it slow.'"

Martin was quite impressed with Pettitte's performance.

"That's as good a bullpen as I've caught all spring," Martin said. "As far as executing pitches, that's as good as I've seen. He kept executing pitch after pitch after pitch."

Martin said what stood out was Pettitte's command and "how serious he is every pitch. It's like a game out there."

Yankees manager Joe Girardi wants to see more.

"I don't get too caught up in it," Girardi said of Pettitte's mound session. "You have to wait until guys get going. We'll have to decide how many bullpens we feel he needs before throwing BP. The big thing is getting his body in shape."

It's possible Pettitte will pitch in an exhibition game before the Yankees head north. The plan is for him to stay in extended spring training and then join New York's rotation perhaps by May.

Cabrera has been doing all right at the spot this spring. He's doing even better at the plate - after hitting a major league-leading .344 last year with 30 home runs and 105 RBIs, he was

Trench Tech fighters, officials visit Tinian

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



A group of Trench Tech Pure-bred officials and fighters visited Tinian last weekend and participated in a number of community service projects to promote goodwill and healthy lifestyle on the island.

Trench Tech's front man Cuki Alvarez brought over Mixed Martial Arts students Mylo Lassiter, Jasper Van Der Mass, Kevin Park, Michael Park and Shane

Alvarez, along with team Zeng Zung's Joshua Q. Castro of Tinian, to speak to a group of 238 Tinian High School students ranging from grades 7 to 12 at the THS cafeteria last Friday and promote the deterrence of bullying, fighting, and violence in schools. Castro graduated from THS in 2000.

Then last Saturday, the entourage met with THS' JROTC members and some other volunteers for a Trash-A-Thon clean up held at Tinian's San Jose Church.

Trench Tech female members Shaniah Alvarez, Amy Taylor, and Mari Palacios joined the group to help out in the Saturday's events. The group cleaned



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of Tinian High School's JROTC pose with Trench Tech members and other volunteers for a group photo after finishing the community clean up held last Saturday at the San Jose Church.

both the inside and outside of the church and then hosted a free "boxercise" clinic for about 50 participants at the Tinian Gymnasium later that afternoon.

Over 30 spectators showed up

to observe the Boxercise session. With the big turnout of the Saturday's session, Trench Tech crew conducted a second one last Sunday before their departure.

Meanwhile, Trench Tech

thanked Zeng Zung's Castro for helping coordinate the series of events, THS principal Julian Hofsneider, Tinian Gym Director Lydia Barcina, THS vice principal Eric San

Nicolas, JC Café' Selena Farrell, Lori Lynn's Hotel, Senator Jude Hofsneider, Star Marianas, and Donna Christian for helping the group with its hotel accommodations.

PROS

From Page 28

Saipan and its history. We love to see those tunnels and other great portion of the course," said Rakita, who was scheduled to join local bikers in a pre-ride of the bike course yesterday afternoon.

Lassonde did not join the pre-bike ride, but trekked the run trail, which he said is tough.

"It's very difficult and technical. You throw in the heat to the equation and I guarantee this will be the toughest race this month," said Lassonde, who had been to XTERRA Guam and Philippines early this month.

Wadsworth and Kelsay also

raced in the Philippines and Guam and the back-to-back races gave them less recovery time.

"This will probably be the longest and hardest race for me this month, as I have only about a week to rest. But that's the best thing, testing this tough and long race. I am really excited to compete in XTERRA Saipan," the XTERRA European Tour No. 10-ranked Wadsworth said.

Though feeling a bit tired, Kelsay said racing in the heat in the Philippines and Guam prepared them for the last leg of XTERRA Tour Asia's Triple Crown.

"This race will be interesting as after adjusting to the heat in Guam and the Philippines, we are starting to shape up a little better. We're getting use to the

tough race, we're holding out," the 2011 XTERRA Japan runner-up said.

Confident

Allen, who topped XTERRA Guam and Philippines, beating the returning Olivier Marceau, is positive of his chances in XTERRA Saipan despite two close wins against the latter.

"I am in good form, going into this weekend's race. I am a bit tired, but still pretty confident as though it will be my first time here, I have been training in Australia for the past several months, while Olivier is coming from winter races in Europe. I am use to the heat and I know I will have a good race this Saturday," said Allen, who led Marceau by less than four minutes

in XTERRA Guam and less than three in the Philippines.

Allen and Bucher, who also topped the women's division of the XTERRA Guam and Philippines, led a group of pros in an afternoon swim at the World War II Tanks in Susupe yesterday. Marceau missed the swim, as he was just expected to arrive on Saipan yesterday morning.

Before the swim, Bucher also had pre-ride on the bike course and she love what she saw on the trail and admitted she still have the legs to aim for the "Triple Crown."

"The course was great, it's a bit dry and I hope it will not rain before the race. I feel good going into the Saturday race and winning again on Saipan will mean a lot to me," Bucher said.

Challenge

Slack and Wasle will be the threats in Bucher's bid for three straight wins this month and the two triathletes are hoping to get the breaks on Saipan this time.

Slack, who led Bucher in Guam early in the race before a wrong bike turn cost her precious minutes, is a strong swimmer and runner but admitted the hilly bike ride on Saipan will be a big challenge for her.

"I am a road triathlete and this year is my first full season in XTERRA. I had two races in Europe last year, but that was pretty different compared to the race here or in Guam. It will be pretty tough, but after riding the bike course I know I will enjoy the race and hopefully get

a good result," said Slack, who lost to Bucher last week only by about three minutes.

Wasle fell behind Slack and Bucher by about two hours and almost did not finish XTERRA Philippines. She had four flat tires, ran out of tubes, and eventually had to borrow a bike.

"Hopefully here there will be no mechanical problems. No flat tires please. It's nice to be back on Saipan and I will try my best to have a better finish this year," said Wasle, who came in at second behind Shonny Vandalingham and beat Bucher last year.

Joining Bucher, Wasle, and Slack in the women's pro field is Saipan's Mieko Carey, who led a group to a pre-bike ride yesterday afternoon.

ATALIG'S

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Esefon exceeded his pitch limit after striking out the first batter in the sixth inning and left his team with the lead with two outs to go. He gave up five hits and five walks with nine strikeouts in five and a third innings. Atalig gave up just two hits, a walk, and seven strikeouts so far through four innings.

In other Majors results, the JPO-DPS Dare Program Enforcers defeated San Vicente A's, 9-2; the Rays downed the Bank of Saipan Red Sox 12-4; and the Rep. Joseph P. Guerrero Dandan Comets blanked the Natibu Sports Association Tanapag Braves, 14-0, on Sunday, while on Saturday, the Natibu Tanapag Falcons run ruled McDonald's 15-5; the Twins 18 pelted IT&E, 18-8; and the IT&E Ol'Aces routed the Robert T. Torres Law Offices

Kagman Little Legals, 14-1.

SUNDAY GAMES

Enforcers 9, San Vicente A's 2

The Enforcers' Kier Agda bashed a two-run homer in the first inning for the early lead and teammate Joaquin Saralu hammered a pair of RBI doubles in the third and fourth frames. The two other runs were scored off an error and a walk in the fifth inning to give the Enforcers a solid 6-0 lead, heading into the last inning.

They went on to add three runs with two outs in the top of the sixth from a three-run homer by Agda.

Saralu pitched five scoreless innings before giving up a pair of free passes that made it home upon his departure with one out in the final stand. He gave up just one hit with five walks and four strikeouts.

Rays 12, Red Sox 4

The Rays trudged ahead, 10-1, in the first two innings and held

the Red Sox to just three runs in the third frame. The Rays racked up six runs out of the gate from a triple by Jay Kalen, two other hits, three walks, and some extra throws, and added four runs in the second inning from four more hits by the thick of its order.

The Rays' Nathaniel Torres was solid on the mound aside from a small hiccup in the third inning. He gave up three earned runs off five hits with two walks and nine strikeouts in five innings for the win. He also batted 2-for-2 with two runs and a base on balls.

Kalen batted 4-for-4 with an RBI and two runs.

Comets 14, Braves 0

The Comets' Austin Hocog dealt a three-hit shutout with 10 strikeouts in four innings, while his teammates delivered a surplus of runs at the plate.

Leadoff batter Aurel Mendiolana broke the ice for the comets in the first inning and ignited a four-run push in the third inning

with a triple.

The Comets then batted through the lineup for the nine-run knock blow in the bottom of the fourth. A pair of doubles from Lorenzo Sebacklim and Hocog and a two-run homer from Agda highlighted the Comets' uprising.

Agda batted 3-for-4 with two RBIs, four runs, and a stolen base, while Hocog swung 2-for-3 with a run.

SATURDAY GAMES

Falcons 15, McDonald's 5

The Falcons assumed control, 5-1, in the first inning from patience at the plate and aggression on the base path and then jumped in front, 11-1, in the second inning off five hits, including doubles from Donnie Manalo, Benen Iguel, and Kekuni Kaainoa.

Falcons' Jose David Pangilinan stepped to the rubber at the start of the second inning and set it to cruise control for the win. McDonald's managed a run to close the second, added another run in the third inning of a triple by John Granada, and almost avoided the early decision in the

fourth, but Falcons' Pangilinan held strong on the mound.

Pangilinan gave up four runs off three hits and three walks with four strikeouts in three innings. The Falcons' bottom four batters out hit the top half, 5-3, as most of the runs actually came off walks and nerves in McDonald's infield with runners on base.

Twins 18, IT&E 8

IT&E held a slight 7-6 edge after the first two innings, but the Twins raised the ante to 12-7, in the third thanks to some pitching woes. Twins' Richard Atalig bagged an RBI single, but most of the runs came in off walks and steals by the speedy Twins.

IT&E tried to answer, but was thrown out at third base twice in the bottom frame, and the wind left its sail after the Twins posted another six runs on the board in the fourth inning, off a grand slam with ducks on the pond by Oscar Lizam. The two other runs were scored off an error and a stolen dish by Atalig.

Despite allowing eight runs and seven walks, winning pitcher Austin Benavente gave up just three hits and a bean ball with five

strikeouts in four innings.

Twins Lizama batted 3-for-3 with four RBIs, four runs, a stolen base and a base on balls; Atalig went 3-for-3 with two RBIs and three runs, six stolen bases, and a base on balls; Boz Igital swung 2-for-2 with an RBI, a run and a stolen base.

Ol'Aces 14, Little Legals 1

The Ol'Aces enjoyed a 8-0 advantage after two innings, scoring four runs in the opening frame from a grand slam with the bases loaded by Mathew Higgins. They added four more runs in the second inning from a two-RBI double by Jimmy Kaipat, a sacrifice fly by Kimo Angailen, and a stolen dish by Virgil Secharmedal.

The Legals' lone run came in the third inning from an error. Secharmedal was lights out on the mound and gave up just one hit and two walks with 10 strikeouts in five innings.

Secharmedal stole home again in the fourth inning and belted a two-RBI single in the fifth that went with an RBI single by Angailen and another stolen dish by Glenn Calvo for the early decision.

MIXED

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halftime advantage.

Thoensaket made it a 3-1 lead with his goal midway in the second half before Gil Kim Yeong cut the deficit to one, scoring his first and only goal with only one minute remaining in the match.

Paire 1, Inter 1

Paire failed to make a follow-up on its 5-0 demolition of SKY in Week 1 after settling for a draw against Inter Godfather's in the opening game in Week 2.

William Dunn scored the lone goal for Paire and it came in the closing seconds of the second half, while Peter Lo-

ken lit up the scoreboard in the 40th minute.

The draw was the second in as many games for Inter, which tied KFAS in its opening match, 3-3.

This year's spring league has nine teams with Tan Holdings FC completing the field and winning over Matansa in the opener on March 11, 4-2.

STA. REMEDIOS

From Page

Trophies and cash prizes will be awarded to the Top 3 finishers, while various consolation

and raffle prizes will also be given away during the banquet.

Santa Remedios did not put out a fundraising tournament last year, but have done so in the past. This event marks its sixth or seventh fundraiser in recent

years.

For more information, or to register, contact tournament coordinator Pete Igital at 322-7554, PPC President Bill Lieto at 287-9459 or PPC Parish Administrator Art Stoia at 322-7254.

2012 Tan Holdings Badminton Doubles Competition

Photos by ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Babes Harris, left, serves while teammate Maggie Chavez gets ready for the next play during an elimination game in the 2012 Tan Holdings Badminton Doubles Competition early this month at the TSL Sports Complex.



Oh Im Bog goes for a backhand return.



Players and spectators watch Midori Obi hits a return.



Chris Hilario, left, and Puy Macario touch racquets after a good play.



Roger Vales hits a volley.



Saipan Badminton Club's Joel Ortega stretches for a return while Efren Cadcad looks on.



Kim Boranah, left, and Hannai Choi's racquets collide during a play from the backline.



Kazuko Sondheim serves.



Son Jae Ok makes a backhand return, while Kim Young Seok looks on.



Jojo Savellano makes a return from the backline.

TSL SPORTS COMPLEX **Activity Schedule for March 22, 2012**

8:00 AM to 12:00 PM: Morning practices
6:30 PM to 9:30 PM: Evening practices



2012 Tan Holdings Intercompany Basketball League

- 7:00 PM: JP Center/TSL Plaza vs. Saipan Grand Hotel
9:00 PM: Shirley's Coffee Shop vs. D&Q/CTSI



There are no scheduled games.





**Now a Bronco,
Manning says
hello to his
new team**

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Saipan Tribune Sports

**Heat score
17 straight
late, rally
past Suns,
99-95**

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28 THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2012

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Pros brace for tough Xterra Saipan

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Visiting pros got a peek of the 2012 Xterra Saipan Championship course yesterday and admitted they are in for a rough race this Saturday.



The visiting pros pose with local triathletes and organizers of the 2012 Xterra Saipan Championship after a short swim in the waters off Susupe yesterday.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Atalig's clutch homer keeps Twins alive

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The As Matuis Twins' Richard Atalig hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the sixth inning against the Pacific Amusement Rays to force a stalemate, 8-8, in their Major division game in the Saipan Little League Baseball last Tuesday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

The Rays pulled ahead, 8-0, with a six-run push in the third inning built off five hits. Nathaniel Torres ripped a two-RBI double and stole home and Manny Esefon bagged an RBI single.

The Twins answered with four runs in the bottom frame off three hits and a pair of fielder's choices and tapped Richard Atalig to the mound to start the fourth frame.

Atalig held down the Rays through regulation and led his team's rally in the sixth inning with a three-run homer.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Santa Remedios Parish Pastoral Council will be holding a fund-raising golf tournament this Saturday at the Marianas Country Club.

Proceeds of the event will go toward some important renovations and main-



As Matuis Twins' Richard Atalig hits a three-run homer with this swing in the bottom of the sixth inning to tie the Pacific Amusement Rays, 8-8, during their Majors division game last Tuesday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

to send the game into extra innings. The Twins scored the previous run off a fielder's choice from Oscar Lizama.

The opposing teams played out the

seventh inning before umpires postponed the match due to time constraints. The game will resume on a later date.

See ATALIG'S on Page 26

Sta. Remedios golf fundraising tourney Saturday

Tenancy repairs to its church, located in Tanapag. Some of the church's vital improvements include: constructing a chapel in the Tanapag cemetery that provides shelter during outdoor services; renovating the parking lot to increase the spaces available; renovating the front entrance to enable easy access for hearst during funeral services; renovating the front walkway to integrate a portico structure to the church;

and landscaping the surrounding area to create a more beautiful ambience.

All local golfers are invited to come out and help support the church.

Tournament fee is only \$100 per person and package includes admission to the awards banquet, which will be held immediately after the event. Check-in time is at 6:30am, while tee off is at 7am.

See STA. REMEDIOS on Page 26

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The proceeds of the event will go toward some important renovations and main-

"I had a pre-ride in the bike course and it was brutal. There are a lot of climbing and then down hill, you have to be very cautious to avoid crash," Australia's Ben Allen said.

Allen along with France's Cedric Lassonde, United Kingdom's Graham



"It's nice to be here. We heard so much about Xterra. See PROS on Page 26

Wadsworth and Jacqui Slack, and the U.S' Will Kelsay and Branden Rakita are debuting in Xterra Tour's Crown Jewel this weekend.

Mixed results for MP United in men's league

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

MP United played two games in Week 2 of the 2012 NMIFA Men's Spring League and had mixed results.

The Typhoons started the week with a 4-0 win over Shirley's Football Club on March 14 and then had to settle for a 1-1 draw against Matansa Football Club last Sunday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

In its first game, MP United drew a hat-trick from Jireh Yobech to shut out Shirley's FC. Yobech scored his first goal of the season in the 21st minute or 10 minutes after Yi Shan Wang broke the ice. The second goal came six minutes into the second half, while the third and last one was made with only a minute left in the match.

Against Matansa, Seoung Joon Lee drilled a goal in the 37th minute to give MP United a 1-0 halftime lead before Ho Jin Woo nailed the equalizer in the second half. The game against MP United was Matansa's second this season after losing Tan Holding's in the league opener, 2-4.

See MIXED on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
MP United's Yi Shan Wang tries to keep the ball away from a Matansa defender during their game in the NMIFA men's league last Sunday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.